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GEORGE FOX
AND HIS TIMES

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SIX LECTURES
ON
GEORGE FOX AND HIS TIMES.

SIX LECTURES
ON
GEORGE FOX AND HIS TIMES.

BY
WILLIAM BECK.

DELIVERED AT THE FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE,
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P R E F A C E.

THESE six Lectures of "George Fox and his Times" (now reprinted with some variations from the *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*) were delivered a few years since at Stoke Newington Meeting-house, at monthly intervals, and after the close of the usual First-day evening meeting for worship.

They were prepared in the hope of increasing that interest in the early history of the Society on the part of its younger members which, there can be no doubt, has of late years been awakened in the midst of the many works of this kind, now issued from the press. The author would commit these lectures as a small contribution in aid of a fuller and more general understanding of the gifted evangelist whose word, two hundred years ago, met with such results.

There is no attempt at a complete biography, but his life is traced from the beginning to the close, with an endeavour to show also somewhat of the state of the times in which his lot was cast.

None, however, can really know George Fox who will not make a personal acquaintance with him through his

Journal, nor can any understand that singular and valuable record of a "well-spent life," without some careful study of the *religious* history of the times.

Lectures are generally understood as serving at best but to awaken thought on the subject they treat, and to prompt after inquiries rather than exhaust their themes. The writer remembers to have heard Charles H. Spurgeon, now some fifteen years ago, when lecturing on George Fox to his students for the ministry at his Tabernacle, declare that he had been surprised at the depths of spiritual experience such a life had opened to him, and how unable he felt himself adequately to pourtray it. He attempted it afterwards to Friends themselves with no feeling that the subject was exhausted, and if the great ones thus own their inabilities—the rest may well feel themselves excused, as the present writer would have done if the many-sidedness of so great a subject had not seemed some justification for the offering of minor contributions.

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LONDON, *Fifth Month*, 1877.

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GEORGE FOX AND HIS TIMES.



LECTURE I.

“I am come that I may bear witness to the truth.”

John xviii. 37.

SUCH are the recorded words of the Lord Jesus Himself, whose personal life and ministry is our one great witness as preserved to us in Holy Scripture—the Scriptures of Truth. Far, be it then, for us, by giving pre-eminence to the life of any particular man, to detract from the unapproachable glory of that one great testimony, Christ's witness to Himself—the Truth. But can such be the case if done in a proper spirit? for as no glory is taken from the sun by any consideration of one of the many orbs that, as planets, revolve around it, so no Christian's life, if rightly viewed, can detract from—but rather glorifies Him who is that life's sun and centre. Thus need we not fear to speak of the great and good men who have arisen and do arise to shine as Planets, with satellites in their followers, if we take care to keep in memory whence cometh this their light, and by what supreme and all-controlling power they themselves are kept in restrained and harmonious revolutions. On such a principle let us review the life

of one whom we regard as a great and good man—a planet in the religious history of our Anglo-Saxon race.

In approaching the life of George Fox, we must understand he is one of a class not perhaps so numerous as those who speak much of the *redeeming* power of the Lord Jesus. Often it is the formerly profligate or dissipated, the swearer and drunkard, that have become changed, and having experienced thereby striking physical contrasts are found, in their utterances, to dwell more entirely on the great Ransom, the Atonement, the all-availing Sacrifice.

George Fox, on the contrary, was one of those outwardly purer types of mind who, when changed, dwell more on *Sanctification* than Justification. He had much of the Apostle John's temperament, and his religious expressions are drawn chiefly from that evangelist; he could say also with Paul he had, all his life, striven to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man; hence we must not expect to observe in him that line of expression used by those who have come out of much outward sin. He was from his youth in all outward appearance a holy character; but whilst it was not his mission to dwell on the outward facts of Redemption purchased for man, his testimony was clear and strong whenever the question of the Atonement was considered.

George Fox was born—we may remember—in the year 1624, or about 250 years ago. He enjoyed religious advantages in being the son of pious parents, and was carefully brought up by them in the quiet of a country life, free from the overpowering influence of great cities. His father, a weaver of woollen in a village

in Leicestershire, was a man of his word, and held in such high respect by his neighbours as to be called by them "righteous Christer," and through his mother (whose maiden name was Lago) George Fox was allied to the stock of the martyrs.

Gifted by nature with a sound and vigorous constitution, that expanded into a large, well-formed, noble-featured man, he had also a sweetness of disposition and gravity of manner that early marked him from his associates, and such a love of truth, and so resolute a *will* in maintaining it, that it became well known when George said "*verily*" there was no moving him. His friends, observing these qualifications, would have made him a priest, and if they had succeeded, no doubt, so far as any special work was concerned, George Fox's name would not have been known to posterity. But there was other work in store for him outside of any then known religious organisation.

The project of training him for a priest not being carried out, his early youth was passed in the quiet of his native village, Drayton-in-the-Clay, in Leicestershire, where, as he grew older, some years were spent by him in the service of one whose cattle he watched over in the fields during the summer season, and whose trade as a shoemaker he followed during the winter. Thus—as a herds-boy in the fields—meditative habits would no doubt become strengthened (as with so many good men before him), whilst the contact with the world, which his attendance at markets and fairs involved, gave him a practical acquaintance with men and their business transactions. The love of truth and truthfulness grew with his years—whatsoever he did

seemed to prosper, and, like Joseph of old, his master's business was blessed in his hands and much of it was left under his successful care. But he could not rest. The quiet of the country—its ever-returning life in spring, the glory of the summer sunshine, the calm majestic order of the starry heavens above, brought him no rest; they could but speak of a Power under whose influence he dwelt, but of whom he was ignorant, and in such ignorance he could not rest. The world, on the other hand, though able successfully to cope with it, offered him no counteracting attraction. He had heard of *another* world whose riches were better than gold, whose fashion fadeth not away, and with all his heart and soul he determined to find it, and if possible enter into communion with its Author.

Such inward unrest being awakened it needed but a slight incident to break him off from his accustomed pursuits, and this occurred one day at a market, when he was about nineteen years of age. An outwardly religious man and relative pressed him to an act of intemperance, he paid down the money to clear the score, and, leaving house and friends, went forth a wandering seeker of that Truth he had heard of, but had not found either in his own guarded home or among the outside crowd of religious professors. He was out on a grand search—even after Him who is invisible—hid from the wise and prudent—the, to men (as men), *great Unknown*; a search greater, and as it would seem more hopeless, than the philosopher after the origin of matter, or the source of perpetual force; one Moses had made, a search Job had engaged in, David and all the Prophets; a search, each one of us, in his own measure, has

to make, if we will know heart-abiding peace ; and we hail George Fox as one of the great cloud of witnesses that prove to us it need not be in vain, and that the glorious promise is true, "Those that seek Me shall find Me." Seldom is anything worth having in this life secured without trouble ; we have to earn our spiritual blessings as we do our outward means of life, in toil—the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent (or earnest) ones take it by force—and yet when found (such are the mysteries of the Kingdom), with all *our* strivings, it is acknowledged as a free gift—a revelation.

George Fox was one of the intensely earnest in such a search ; he spent years in seeking for the Truth—tried various means of help, and consulted with many of the religious *people*. He gave himself up at one time to contemplation—retired to the woods for days and nights together—practised long fasting and reading, and so studied the Scriptures that he came to know the Bible almost by heart ; and yet the search for this inward peace—a knowledge of the truth could give—was all unavailing ; his melancholy and sorrow were profound—he saw more and more of the good things the holy men of old had possessed, but felt all the more they were not his own by *personal* experience. He hoped in this extreme strait of mind to find some *man* that could speak the consoling word, but in this part of his search was singularly unsuccessful. Relatives, friends, and priests alike failed ; his relations thought him crazed, and his friends prescribed matrimony to dispel his mental gloom ; one priest sent him off in anger because George, in his abstractedness, had trod as they walked

in the garden on his flower-beds; another made sport of the soul-sick youth before his maid-servants, and proposed two very incongruous things for his cure—"sing psalms and chew tobacco." Thus did one and all fail to understand the greatness and the depth of that for which he was searching, and for not finding which this pure-minded, earnest lad, was plunged in so great a spiritual distress. Nevertheless he persevered, even to the verge of despair.

This sad mental condition must have lasted with him (in more or less intensity) for three or four years, during which he travelled in various parts of the country, and spent a portion of this time in London. In not a few of the places thus visited by him he found sympathising Christians—and, as he terms them, "tender people"—his tarriance with whom seemed for awhile to give his spirit relief, but only too soon to pass away, and to be succeeded by those darker and more abiding times, when, as he says: "I longed in the daytime for the night, and in the night longed for the day, so heavy were my sorrows upon me." He came to the conclusion that no living *man* would be able to speak to his state, and the little remaining faith he had had in priests (as a set of men made holy in virtue of their professional training) vanished. No college he perceived (and it came to him as a discovery) could make of any man a true minister. He felt also that the religious people did not understand his deep spiritual aspirations, and so he forsook *their* society, and he also gave up attendances at any of their public places of worship, because they thought them holy, whilst he himself, with Paul, was assured that God "dwelt not in temples made with

hands." He learnt, as he thus suffered in isolation of spirit, deepening views of the nature of Faith ; that it was a result not of reason or intellect, but, to be true, must be a Divine work in the heart. During all this time, though sore chastened and afflicted, he was not the gloomy enthusiast, or an outcast from society, like some self-tormenting fakir or devotee. He ever had a judgment combined with zeal, and it is clear he was never for any long time together away from his fellow-men or the knowledge of his friends ; his isolation being in *spirit* and religious communion rather than *bodily* banishment. He mentions in his Journal how, although he could not unite in their sports, nor take part even in marriage feasts, he would yet spend the money he might save thereby on the poor, and would visit the young couples, and give sound advice on their outward conduct. He was, in fact, under the law ; he was striving of himself to be *holy* in word and deed, and so to fulfil the Divine law, and know *sanctification*. Justification (as received by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus) was already his experience, but he longed for sanctification, and sought it by good works, meditation and prayer. But he found the law a schoolmaster ; he felt its hardness, he suffered its stripes, it bowed him down to the depths of self-despair ; but it brought him consciously to Christ. The joy came out of great sorrow, the light out of much darkness. " I felt," he says, " I had nowhere to go, none to speak words of comfort, none to understand my state." And then he adds, " It was in these very depths I heard the voice—' There is one, even CHRIST JESUS, that can speak to thy condition ;' and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy, and I did see

why—that I might give Him all the glory that Christ Jesus might have the pre-eminence, who enlightens and gives Grace, Faith, and Power ;” thus, he adds, “ When God doth work who shall let it ? and this I knew *experimentally*.” He lovingly embraced the conviction, and forthwith Christ as revealed to him in the heart was his all in all. He rose up, and walked no longer a man bowed down with sorrow, seeking for what he could not find ; he had found a new power, it gave his spiritual nerves strength ; no longer isolated, but brought into conscious communion (through the Lord Jesus Christ) with the Father of Spirits, he experienced that new birth—the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

We lay stress upon this (his early personal experience) because it lies at the root of the man’s whole character ; and George Fox himself lays much stress upon it, giving page after page of his autobiographical narrative, in description of what he had undergone before he passed from a state of sorrow to that of peace ; from a merely natural to a spiritual life ; from justification to sanctification. He had had his mountains of religious self-confidence laid low ; his depths of self-despair upheaved ; the chaff of his own imaginings had fled before the winnower’s blast, and he had felt his search tested as to its sincerity in the heat of the refiner’s furnace, and his tongue was now to speak aloud of the Lord’s goodness, and of His wonderful work, not only as to the sacrifice of Himself, but of His work (as the risen and glorified head of humanity), by His Spirit in the heart of men.

We now come to a point where men (and good men possibly) will differ. None can deny the purity of

George Fox's life, and many—in the grand simplicity of his views on all subjects, civil, moral, and religious, and his bold independent ways—esteem him one of the greatest of England's reformers. Has not Carlyle said, in his "*Sartor Resartus*," that "no grander thing in the moral world was ever done than when George Fox, stitching himself a suit of leather" (which, by the way, there is no evidence he ever did), "went forth determined to find Truth for himself, and to battle for it against all superstition, bigotry, and intolerance"? But though there is this high appreciation of him and his work by such men, they regard it as his *own* work and to the glory of our common *humanity*; they treat this grand discovery of his as a development of his own self-consciousness; thus missing what to our minds is its real value—even that he had heard with the inward ear the voice of the Son of God, and *therefore* lived, as he had never done before; and henceforth was as one quickened by a new life in himself, and able by his *witness* to quicken it in others.

Many persons, again, suspect him, and assert it was all imagination; but we believe George Fox was far too keen a thinker—much too closely engaged in experimental research, not to discern between mere imaginations and a basis for heartfelt conviction. He knew what he wanted, and knew when he had found the Truth—even the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus; the Bridegroom of souls. Others say he was but an enthusiast. We grant he *was* enthusiastic, but what good is obtained or done without enthusiasm? His zeal was in a good cause, he endured much, kept judgment and discretion in full sight, and exhibited something so practical and good for

a result that justice forbids us to stigmatise him as a mere enthusiast.

Thus become the subject of a *new* spiritual life, it was not at first clear to him in what line of service he would be led to its exercise, and the three leading professions of law, physic, and divinity, would seem to have been passed in review—with a result, that to none of these, as then practised, could he devote the quickened energies of his life. To the Legal profession there seemed to him no attractions, as he thought that if men would but come into the state of love to all their fellow-men he was himself humbly brought into, there would be no need of it. As to the Medical—whilst he had an insight, as he says, into the virtues and natures of all things as to make him think this might be his allotted pursuit—he felt that prayer, after all, was the best source of healing, and he could not turn aside to learn the practice of curative arts. To the third profession—that of Divinity—he felt no freedom, as it involved a training, in which he had lost faith, and the maintenance of a system in which he thought he discerned the absence of any divine foundation; and so, relinquishing all ideas of qualifying himself for practice in either of the three learned professions of the day, he went forth alone, endeavouring to follow implicitly the guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ who had thus brought him to such peace in his own heart.

He became more earnest and faithful in the rebuke of sin and sinners. He attended markets and fairs to warn men of judgment to come, and exhorted to repentance and godly living, and to the practice of truth in all things. But his chief work appeared to be with men

outwardly acquainted with religion and making a profession of it—whom he sought to show had no knowledge of its power, and thus cause them, like himself, to seek for a consciously-obtained possession of what they so much professed.

In this way we read of him again seeking the society of pious people—not now as an inquirer, but as a Teacher. He freely mingled in their conferences and discussions, promulgating his views and sustaining them against opposers. It was on one of these occasions that his great power in public prayer was manifested—the people present said it was as if the place was shaken. From youth to old age prayer was the clothing of his fervent spirit; and his friend William Penn said of him, when he was gone, that above all things he excelled therein. His prayers were no formal utterances, nor put up at the call of man—“bidding to prayer,” so common in those days, was utterly repudiated by him; a faith in the Spirit’s promptings was most earnestly believed in and reverently waited for; then—in the awful gravity of his frame, the fewness yet fulness of his words—such unction attended him in these engagements as to make them deeply impressive occasions. They marked all his ministry, and his friends have noted that his last public service a few hours before his death was in *prayer* at the conclusion of his address.

He was at the time of which we have been speaking a young man of some twenty-two years of age, and was now fairly embarked on an evangelistic mission, travelling about to different places and among all kinds of religious people, chiefly in the Midland dis-

tricts of England. In doing this, he soon became involved in violent contests with other Christians, so it will be well to consider the peculiar ground of his mission and religious views as contrasted with theirs.

George Fox, as we have before said, bore a resemblance in his religious experience to the great Apostle Paul, and, like him, wherever he preached he made a ferment. New aspects of truth generally do make a stir before they find their berths—in men's minds.

The Apostle Paul, though brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the "perfect law of his fathers," found peace away from his native land, from the holy city, its temple, altars, and ritual: he was smitten down at noon-day on the plains of Damascus—the suburbs of a Gentile city. So George Fox—trained by pious parents, inheriting the very blood of martyrdom in his veins, acquainted with the teachings of the various Churches, and deeply learned in the written Word—found no peace therein. His peace came by hearing, as he believed, the voice of the Lord Jesus Himself, and in submission to His power and teaching in his own heart he went forth and preached a gospel so free from customs, rites, or ritual, that the Conservatives of his day everywhere opposed him.

In the early pages of his Journal is to be found a full statement of the character of the Gospel ministry he felt called upon to exercise throughout the country. "I was sent forth," he says, "to declare the word of life and reconciliation *freely*, that all might come to Christ, who gives *freely*, and be *renewed* into the image of God which man and woman were in before they fell. For to as many as should so receive Him in their hearts,"

"I saw," he adds, "that he would give power to them to become the Sons of God," "which I," he says, "had obtained by receiving Christ."

So long as this earnest youth—in town and market—confined himself to themes of personal righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come (in which he laboured mightily), the common people heard him gladly. But when the professors were encountered with these doctrines on attainable perfection in this life through the power of an indwelling Christ, they greatly opposed such views as being impossible and even blasphemous, and were seemingly unaware of their Scriptural truth. So as he, waxing warm in controversy, unmasked what he deemed their ignorance and hypocrisy—denounced their love of the world and its temporalities—the magistracy were stirred up to their aid, and the youthful preacher had a prophet's reward in persecution freely and fully accorded him.

The Scribes and Pharisees of that day were also moved with envy at the effect he had upon their hearers: for very many—drawn away from their *sermons*—came (as he says) to sit under the pure teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

That was his aim and mission—he had no idea of founding a sect—and his having done so was an incidental feature due very much to the religious ignorance, general lack of spiritual enlightenment, and the brutality prevailing in those days of social and religious strife. He only wished to bring souls to Christ and leave them there.

Such he conceived the great mass of the preachers of that day failed to accomplish, and in the sermons with

which they sought to feed the people he regarded them as dwelling too much on the *outward*, to the neglect of the *inward* work of religion. He heard them discoursing eloquently on the sins of men of old, such as Cain and Balaam, Dathan and Abiram, and the gainsaying of Coar—whilst to his mind every man had a measure of a similar spirit of evil within him which must be cast out by the power of Christ; a work the Lord sought to accomplish, and of which they (professed teachers of righteousness) seemed to him so ignorant—not really knowing the spirit of the Scriptures on the letter of which they dwelt so much.

“Their black earthly spirit,” he says, in his quaint style, “wounded my life.” And as he heard the bells clanging from the steeples for their sermons, it sounded to him but as the “bellman ringing to a sale” of scriptural merchandise; and he made no hesitation in letting them know his opinion, giving it in the style of a prophet of old, with a “Thus saith the Lord.”

For such violent controversy and such sharp persecution to have arisen on such grounds as these make us aware how much English Christians have progressed in their knowledge of the scope and meaning of Scripture truth since these days. He would now have been welcomed as an earnest Evangelist by all the Churches, or considered as an organizer of meetings for “Scriptural holiness.”

There were many very earnest and deeply pious divines during Oliver's protectorate, whose works and Christian character we fain would follow; but there can be no doubt that, in the overthrow of the Episcopal Church and the emptying of her pulpits, a set of

preachers who did no real service to the cause of true religion had occupied them and were lamentably deficient in their enforcement of any real heart-work to the *cleansing* of the soul. They rested too much on an imputed righteousness, and even pleaded for sin's continued power over a Christian in this life, as if such gave value to the work done for him on Calvary.

"I found none," George Fox says, "that I discoursed with that could bear to be told that any should come to that righteousness and holiness Adam was in before he fell, and to be as clear and pure without sin as he was." How different would have been his experience at the present day; and in the change of religious opinion on these subjects, may we not see a fruit in which his own labours had no inconsiderable share!

Its first fruit to him was confinement in a dungeon in the town of Nottingham, where the authorities, stirred up by the ministers to whom he had preached these doctrines, put him in "a nasty stinking" place of a dungeon. It was not unusual in those days of unsettlement for controversies to arise in churches—and on this occasion the minister, in quoting Peter's allusion to the Scriptures as a "sure word of prophecy," had dwelt so *exclusively* on their external and intellectual aspect, that George Fox's spirit brake forth with an "Oh no!" And (in his usual earnest style) his declaration to the people was that the Spirit who gave forth the Scriptures must be heeded and waited for to really understand them—*thus* would they know the day-star of Christ to arise in their own hearts.

He appears to have made a great impression on the Nottingham people during his imprisonment, so that it

was no check but rather a furtherance to a knowledge of his views on these subjects—and many were astonished at what seemed to them a wonderful power in “the youth”—“for I was,” he says, “imprisoned under that name.”

When released, which was not until a pretty long time had been spent in this “nasty stinking place,” we find him going forth increased in influence and awakening much attention to his views in the Midland Districts. He quotes instances of healing in both body and mind that occurred by his intercessions in the case of various afflicted persons. And the Lord’s name, he declares, was honoured—“To whom,” (he adds) “be the glory of all His works.”

As George Fox was now on the eve of his first severe confinement, and as such had to be endured on a charge of *blasphemy*, we may here with some satisfaction observe that his conduct, although open in the opinion of outward professors to such an interpretation, was really free from any such iniquity. He asserted of himself, as we quoted a little while before, to have had such a work wrought in his own heart as to have become consciously “a son of God”—he believed such to be a consequence of all true belief. He now encountered some Ranters who *seemed* to hold similar views, but he indignantly denied their fellowship, and treated their claims to divinity as presumptuous wickedness; for they said they were God, and would have him own their blasphemous pretensions; but he, obtaining some silence amid their ravings, put a few pointed questions to these self-installed deities on subjects known only to the Almighty, and in their manifested ignorance a signal collapse ensued. To such absurd wickedness he proved

himself a stranger, holding fast to the truth in the spirit of the holy men of old, whose trust, like his, had been "Christ in us the hope of glory."

He was now come to Derby, and presenting himself at a great lecture held in that city among officers of the army, priests and preachers, and a colonel that was a preacher, he had, when the discourses were over, commenced to speak on the comparative inutility of men's preachings, baptisms, and sacrifices to the work that Christ would, and sought to, do within them, and as they opposed, he waxed strong in spirit, and says: "The power of God thundered amongst them, and they did fly like chaff before it."

Nevertheless they had him before the magistrates, under whose cross-questionings certain admissions were conceived to have been made by him in reference to a freedom from sin and a oneness with Christ which, in the judgment of these authorities, warranted them in his committal to prison as a *Blasphemer*; and here we must leave him, undergoing a prolonged imprisonment in their gaol of more than a year for this (as we believe) unjust and grievous accusation.

We have traced him from his childhood, observed his purity and uprightness, his zeal for truth, and the utter despair that came upon him as he practised self-righteousness; to find it failed to procure any enduring peace. The more earnestly he sought for truth the greater seemed the depths of his despair. No comfort was found by him in any man, however religious. Some had misunderstood, and others had had him in derision. Isolation and darkness were the clothing of his earnest spirit.

Then we saw how the change came, and light arose on his darkness; his countenance was no longer one of sadness, and his word became a word of power, for the Lord Jesus Christ had been *revealed* to him. He who, earnest (to the forsaking of home and friends), had sought to be *taught* the way of life, and failed wherever he had tried, found the Lord Jesus willing to do this and *teach* him Himself—that it was His work, the result of His glorious resurrection; so that not only in days long past, at sundry times and in divers manners, had the Fathers, the Prophets, and Apostles known His life-giving power, and teaching, bequeathing it by their utterances preserved in the Scripture, but each one might for himself know the same experience as theirs, and see (as George Fox perceived), that to this glorious truth of an *indwelling* Christ in the heart of the believer give all the Scriptures witness.

It was forthwith his Mission himself to bear witness to the source of his own peace and knowledge in the way of Salvation to turn men to Christ, and, as he said, “to leave them there.” His whole life we shall find was true to this (as he verily believed) divinely-imparted commission. Persecution could not turn him aside, nor the more seductive arts of flattery, and he was not without his trial of these. The authorities were once so impressed they would have taken him into pay as their leading priest. “It was time,” he said, “for me to be gone; for if their eye was so much to me, or any other like me, they would not come to their own teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.”

He was convinced no amount of religious training; no self-directed strictness of life; no conformity to



Ordinances and Sacraments, could of themselves effect a change of heart so as to make anyone a true Christian believer. His new birth must be effected by a baptism of the Holy Spirit and of power.

Under which experience he was assured, as having known it for himself, that the heart of a believer did become the temple of Christ's indwelling power, who, as He was suffered to rule, would reign to the subjection of all our soul's enemies, bringing back to man spiritually the Paradise he had lost.

Such was his belief—one, too, which tens of thousands of his fellow-men came to realise for themselves under his ministry; one which a century later animated a Whitefield and a Wesley to the ingathering of their harvest of souls; a faith, too which now, when spoken in power, is found to unite Christians separated by sectarian differences, but rallying to these views of *personal* Holiness through union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

These views may be, and have been, pushed to extremes. It is interesting, therefore, to observe that George Fox thus early in his ministry, and when but "a youth," was enabled to take a safe intermediate position.

He was found testifying against those who professed to expound the Scriptures—only because they dwelt so much on the outward sacrifice and outward observances. His severity was greater towards the crowds of Ranters who abounded in those days, that exalted themselves above the Scriptures, and declared all things were right to them if only *they* felt them to be so.

His rule was that the two witnesses must combine,

and the authority of each be acknowledged—the word within and the word without; the word of olden time and the word of the present day—and he had no faith in any personal illuminations unless they were found to correspond with the testimony of Scripture. Thus would he always try the spirit of the prophets as by the prophets, and uphold in unswerving obedience the authority of the written word.

Such an allegiance saved him, even in the fervour of his youth, from the dangerous errors some would attribute to his views. The magistrates at Derby had drawn from him the confession, “Christ *is* in me”; but when they temptingly said, “Then thou thyself art Christ?” “Nay,” he indignantly replied, “We are nothing; CHRIST is all.” Here the true gravitation was acknowledged—the Central Sun of Faith confessed. So, though he be left by town magistrates a prisoner among thieves, we may be assured his zeal, coupled with so much discretion, will be found in after years to have taken a further and wider course.

NOTE.—How similar were Wesley and Whitefield’s experiences to those of George Fox—though expressed in different language. John Wesley speaks of himself, in 1738, as knowing “a deliverance from every fleshly desire, and from every outward and inward sin.” George Whitefield says: “I learned that a man may go to church, say his prayers, receive the sacrament, and yet not be a Christian.” “I discovered,” he adds (in a discourse delivered near the close of life, descriptive of these his early experiences), “that they who know anything of religion know it is a vital union with the Son of God—Christ formed in the heart.” The published lives of these great men are full of expressions on the two great themes of George Fox’s early ministry—sanctification, and Christ within.

LECTURE II.

WE left George Fox close prisoner among felons in the gaol of Derby, but he had wronged no man; nevertheless fellow-men had accused him of grievous blasphemy, for the definite persistence with which he had asserted an union, as a believer, with his Saviour. "Christ *in* me, the hope of glory," was his theme, and such an assumption the justices thought was blasphemous wickedness in him, though no sin at all for such an one as Paul the Apostle to say. If loss of liberty, combined with cruel treatment, is any test of the sincerity of a man's convictions, George Fox proved his by the constancy with which he (when but a youth) endured a confinement of nearly twelve months' duration in Derby Prison. His companion soon gave way, and, preferring his liberty to any imprisonment for religious opinions, left George Fox to suffer alone. He also might have had his freedom much earlier than it really came if he had but yielded to tempting solicitations; but to seeming kindness, as to unprovoked harshness, he was immovable, if either were incompatible with the maintenance of his religious convictions.

He might have had his liberty if he would cease from oppositions, but he would declaim against the priests for covetousness, and for their preaching to the people that sin was inevitable to man during his mortal life; whilst he maintained that Christ having come

to put away sin had really and truly done so, and that every true believer might realise this for himself by allowing Christ to work His work in him, and until he had done so he was not what Christ would have him to be—all who *had* done so had come up out of a state of death and darkness into the light and power of God.

His friends and relations thought him crazed because he thus stood for the possibility of purity, righteousness, and perfection; his judges abused him roundly, and one of them brutally cuffed him with his own hands as his prisoner “was kneeling down to pray to the Lord to forgive him.” It was this judge who first gave the nickname of Quaker, because the young man had bade him “tremble at the word of the Lord.” This imprisonment went on month after month among common felons, but was borne in so much of patient suffering that some at least of his persecutors changed their behaviour to him, especially his gaoler, who, from being fierce and cruel, became kind and considerate, saying, “I have been to you as a lion, and will now be as a lamb.” The magistrates also were more lenient, and permitted him to walk a mile or so from the prison, as he might incline, and would have preferred it if George would have failed to return; but he scorned such a mode of release, and, confident in the justice of his cause, awaited for his judges themselves to formally acquit him of the horrible charge of blasphemy.

Townsfolk and strangers coming into the town felt an attraction to this youth—a prisoner for his conscience’ sake, and would gather to hear him preach; and so greatly did the esteem in which he was held increase, that when—on the occasion of raising soldiers in that

neighbourhood to go and fight for the Parliament against Prince Charles (then recently landed to contend for the crown and throne of his late father)—the volunteers wished for George Fox as their officer, the magistrates (strange as it may appear) pressed him to consent; but he would not do so, and, under pretence that his refusal arose from disloyalty to the Commonwealth, these town authorities had him to the dungeon in closer bondage than before. The incident is important, as having brought out so early his views on War, which have for so long been a distinguishing doctrine among his followers; and it is interesting to note the *GROUND* of his objection—it was the result and natural consequence of a change that had taken place *within him*—not views taken up as a *theory*, or as acting out any special divine command. HE refused to become a soldier because, as he said, the spirit of strife was *slain* within him; and, having been brought into a love for all, could not, he declared, fight against any. His views were the *fruit* of his conversion; not taken up as *proofs* of obedience to the Divine will, but they were to him the *result* of the unrestrained working of the Holy Spirit within.

Another interesting incident in this imprisonment was his being led, whilst himself suffering under the severity of the law, to plead for the life of a young person condemned to death for some simple act of felony (capital punishment at that time being inflicted for slight offences). Her life was ultimately spared, though, with a refinement of cruelty now happily unknown, they kept back the reprieve till she was under the gallows, and had even had the cap drawn over her

face for death. Whether the result was due to his intercession we cannot exactly tell, but the earnest attempts he made are interesting as introducing those enlightened views of philanthropy for which his followers have for so many generations successfully contended.

His efforts had also been directed during this long imprisonment to secure a proper classification of prisoners, there being at that time no distinction whatever made between them. His voice arising out of that dungeon—apparently from amidst the transgressors—was little heeded then, but its echoes have had wide results, and the trumpet-notes then given have echoed through his successors, and helped to change public opinion on the subject of prison discipline.

His own imprisonment, after the refusal to head the troop of soldiers, was become severe, nevertheless his character for constancy and purity increased until at last, when about twelve months of these alternations of confinement had passed, it seemed to the magistrates as if they had better let him go, for the citizens were beginning to think their town was being plagued as a punishment for keeping a simple pure-minded youth (such as they had found Fox to be) in bondage. So the judicial word was given, and he was once more free.

He went forth from that Dungeon fuller than ever of zeal, and with a burning consciousness of the work that was before him; this he expresses in rather strong words:—"I saw my coming out would be as the letting of a lion out of a den among the wild beasts; for all professions stood in a beastly* spirit, pleading for sin

* All men unenlightened he considered as of the beastly or animal nature.

and imperfection, and they all kicked, and yelled, and roared and raged against the life and spirit which gave forth the Scriptures."

Young as he was, and fresh in the enjoyment of a liberty so long withheld, it does not surprise us to find that it was at this time, just after his release from Derby, there occurred one of those few instances to which his detractors have been able to take exception, and in which many sober-minded of his friends have joined. It was when he walked all through the streets of Lichfield barefooted, having left his shoes in a field outside, and cried, as he walked up and down, "Woe, woe to the bloody city!" It was winter time, hard frost and snow on the ground, but he says he felt no chill, so fervent were his feelings. It was market day, and the streets were full of living men engaged in peaceful traffic; but he saw, he says, nothing but blood in street or market; it seemed coursing down the channels—blood, to his eyes, was everywhere. And yet, as he himself admits, no woe ever, to his knowledge, fell upon the city, nor had it, so far as he could discover, done anything special to deserve such a fate, until at last his historical researches showed him there had once been great slaughter there; but then it was so far back as the days of Diocletian, and few, perhaps, can see in the death of those martyrs a reason why, some thousand years after, "Woe! woe!" should be cried through the streets of Lichfield.

Many, if not most, will admit, both in the act and the supposed reason for it, a mistake excusable under the circumstances; proof that all our best men (save the One great Divine Man) are but men of like passions with ourselves; and we can the more readily assent to

this, as it occurred on the eve of George Fox's first missionary journey to the North, when the best parts of his character shone forth conspicuously.

Let us, on the threshold of this journey, pause to consider who this man was, as to his outward form and manner, seeing he was about to produce such an effect in the towns and among the wolds of Yorkshire, and the dales of the North-west—in Cumberland, Westmoreland and thereaway.

In after life we hear of him as a bulky man ; in this period of his youthful manhood he was tall, and, although not remarkable for beauty, his countenance was noticed as having a sort of majestic sweetness about it. Unlike the Puritan of his time, he wore his luxuriant hair long till it fell upon the shoulder, and with a curl in it. He said he took no pride in this, and did but let the hair take its course. Thus, tall and imposing in his general person, he had a natural power of endurance greatly strengthened by his temperate course of life, and was evidently possessed of no little physical and muscular power. We read on one occasion of this being put to the test by an officer of the army who declared he *would* make George bend ; but though he tried to take him unawares, and rushed at him with all his force, the sturdy Quaker received the shock, and stood his ground —“ firm as a tree and pure as a bell,” as they afterwards said of him ; they could not make him bend.

Thus was he strong and well-fitted for the constant journeys and great hardships of his long career. He had also a quickness and readiness of brain indicated in the brightness of his eyes ; these, melted in tears readily to tales of sorrow, would turn with tenderness towards the

contrited follower, but flashed with piercing force on the contumacious disputant. "Pray," said one of these, "take thine eyes off me, they pierce me so." "Look," said one of the crowd, "see how his eye shines!" and even judges would complain of their piercing power as he gazed at them.

Without possessing the power of voice some of his followers—such as Edward Burrough—had, George Fox was far above ordinary men in this respect; he could harangue for hours together to crowds in the open air, and so make himself heard above the tumult of an excited Court that a judge called out to him once, "Thou hast good lungs, George; I must order in four or five town-criers to stop thee." This vocal strength a fiddler found when sent at another time to overpower his voice as he was preaching from the window of a dungeon, for George brake forth into a song that quite overmastered the strongest notes of the player.

In his personal habits he was what would be called a gentlemanly man—one fond of clean and good linen; this served him in good stead when arrested once on a charge of vagrancy; for a vagrant, they said, would not have had such linen as his. This trait has been exhibited in his followers also, as the beautiful muslins and cambrices of venerable women Friends, and the fine white neckties of the men of the older generation, come to pleasant remembrance.

Remarkable, even from his early years, for gravity and judgment, he combined with these solid qualities unceasing activity, required hardly any sleep at night, and seemed quite indifferent to weather or fatigue. He was incessantly moving about (when free from

prison), travelling great distances, sometimes on foot, mostly on horseback, and so swift in his movements that some called him a "wizard."

One of his earliest nicknames was the "man in leathern breeches;" and this has come down to us magnified into the assertion that he wore a suit of leather, and, greater marvel still, that it was all of his own making, of which, however, it is difficult to find any trace beyond the epithet just quoted. It surely is nothing uncommon even now for men who ride much, to wear leathern breeches. No other allusions are found to his dress except that in later life he is mentioned as wearing buttons of alchemy. His costume appears to have been like that of other men of his day, only he omitted their trimmings, which then were as much a part of a gentleman's dress as they now are of a lady's. It may be asked how he could travel about as he did all his lifetime, having no trade or handicraft. He certainly bore his own charges, and seldom if ever took money from Friends. It seems he was possessed of a small estate, and this sufficed for his very simple wants.

In eloquence, Naylor, Burrough, Howgill, and others, had doubtless far greater gifts, but in George Fox's discourses was a pith and depth that made them, as was said, texts on which others hung their more elaborate discourses; he had a great gift in opening meanings to Scripture. His mind was naturally one of no ordinary grasp, and dealt with the deepest subjects that concern humanity.

Ready wit and shrewd common-sense were also ever in command. Once, as he went to prison with his friends, he observed that all arrangements as to accommodation

had better be deferred till they saw who was the master of the prison, the gaoler or his wife; and the issue proved his shrewdness, for they found on coming there that the wife (though lame) was the real ruler, and those arrangements his companions had wished to make with the husband would have been useless. His Journal (which all should read who wish to know the man) abounds with instances of the ready wit that helped in many a controversy and wordy encounter.

Possessed of these natural parts, there is yet but little doubt that, in early life at least, his education had been very limited. He never could write well, but that was an art a man unbred in school-learning would not in those days acquire; he was however alive to the acquisition of knowledge, and could hold his place well among educated men. Both Thomas Ellwood and William Penn, themselves men of first-class education and refinement, bear witness to this. The former writes of him that he was manly in personage, graceful in countenance, grave in gesture, and courteous in conversation; and William Penn (himself a man bred in courts), says he was "civil beyond all forms of breeding; a strong man, a new and heavenly man, a divine, and a naturalist, and all of God Almighty's making." These are strong terms, but we could have quoted stronger; and they are used in a memorial of him which passed the approval of his friends, who knew him well. Having now said thus much of his person and character, it may be well to resume the thread of the narrative, and see how these remarks are borne out.

By the time George Fox had recovered his liberty from Derby Prison it was the fourth year of his

appearance as a public preacher, but his services in this engagement had not taken him to other than the midland counties surrounding his native county of Leicestershire. In these districts, whilst a marked influence had been exerted by his ministry, it had not resulted in the formation of any definite set of followers. But now, coming forth like a strong man ready to run a race, he no sooner entered Yorkshire than we find a different experience. Persons who there heard and believed in him, banded together; and among them arose many ready to give up all to promulgate his views of Gospel Truth, and Power. We soon hear of such men as James Naylor, Richard Farnsworth, William Dewsbury, Thomas Aldam, and Alexander Parker, all persons of great force of character, some of them men of position and education, who themselves became preachers, and at times travelled with him. Thus a strong impression was made in this great county: we hear constantly of the great meetings he had, the very many who accepted his views; the commotions caused amongst those in authority; the great houses where he stayed, and the great acceptance accorded him; also of the many priests, country squires, and leading gentry who welcomed the Quaker missionary, not a few of whom joined his cause. It is impossible, as we track him moving up and down and round about this great county of Yorkshire, in his first missionary visit there, to refrain from admiration at the zeal and untiring energy he displayed. The great black horse he at first rode was put aside, and most part of the distance was traversed on foot; sometimes with companions, but generally alone. No severity of weather checked his course, no thought

of ease or comfort was admitted to interfere ; the great houses where he went were visited for his *work*, not for his *comfort*. To such feelings he was wonderfully indifferent ; often passing the night without any other shelter than a furze bush on a common, or a hay-stack in a field ; and making a little drink of water serve as the refreshment for a day. Yet there were sermons for hours together to crowds in the open air, followed by disputes and arguments in houses ; there were reasonings with priests, and sympathising visits to the awakened ones.

It is no wonder to find, as the result of all this energy and self-denial, that he was received as a prophet, and his words listened to as if he were commissioned from on high. Enthusiastic adherents flocked around, and on the other hand the strongest opposition was awakened. If he was a prophet, he certainly had from the Yorkshire men a full share of a prophet's reward in abuse and ill-treatment. They hit him harder and abused him worse in Yorkshire than he had been before ; but he held on his way amongst them undaunted and undismayed. Whether they threw him down the steps of York Cathedral ; or hit him on the mouth, as a parish clerk did (in one of their churches), with his brass-bound Bible ; or kicked and beat and stoned him in the uprising of violent and brutal mobs, not one of these things moved or terrified him. Wherever he was most ill-used he was sure to reappear ; wherever his friends were in most danger, he was sure to be at their side ; and as a consequence his influence only increased with persecution, and his two years' ministry throughout Yorkshire produced a great result in the number of his adherents.

Still the success he was permitted to attain did not culminate to its fulness in this county. It was when he went onwards more to the North-West that he met with this result ; frequent intimations on his spirit seemed to foreshadow it to him as he drew nigh to the dales of Westmoreland and Cumberland, where it occurred. He was now again alone and on foot, journeying onward in Lancashire in the same abstermious and indefatigable manner as he had done from the first. He tells us he went up a hill that lay in his course, and saw the sea bordering the land (doubtless it was his first sight of the great waters). He had great impressions as he gazed upon it, and believed some decided success was at hand. Need we mention how these impressions of success were confirmed by the result ? How in these dales, into which he was thus entering alone, a solitary preacher of righteousness, he was to find the people whom in vision he had foreseen as clothed in white raiment ; a people of simple yet firm faith, who had undergone, themselves, mental and spiritual training like his own, and were ready to hear the joyful sound, and embrace the cause. Need we say how from these districts came the men who formed the pith and marrow, the bone and sinew, of the Quaker Church ? Need we remind any that here George Fox found Margaret Fell, in whose conversion lay the turning-point of his religious career, so far as being the founder of a *sect* was concerned.

We may, perhaps, be allowed, in view of the comparative importance of this latter circumstance, to become a little more minute, though at the risk of treating on a subject worn historically somewhat threadbare.

Margaret Fell was among women one of a thousand, and being also possessed of ample means and estate, exerted much influence in the districts around Swarthmore Hall, where she lived. Through her husband's engagement as a judge taking him out for great distances from home, Margaret Fell was left in charge, often long times together. Ordering her household well, and being deeply religious, she extended a judicious and free hospitality to all strangers, especially those who travelled in word and doctrine. Hence, on one of these occasions of her husband's absence, George Fox became a guest at the Hall, and during his stay its mistress and the whole family became converts to his views of the *Power* of Christ within the heart. The priest, previously in high favour, did his best to prevent such a result; but Margaret Fell had now lost all faith in his teaching, and had become (under George Fox's ministry) so awakened to a higher and deeper, and, as she felt, a *truer* Christian life as to decline any further attendance at the church. Such a defection by one so influential, made a great commotion in the neighbourhood, and all kinds of means were tried by the ministers and magistrates to stop what they thought heresy, which grew apace the more they sought to put it down.

This went on for some weeks, and meanwhile news came to Margaret Fell of her husband (the Judge's) expected return; and that he, having heard that his family had all been *bewitched* and turned Quakers, was coming home full of indignation and wrath at such a result. This threw her into a great distress of mind, as the holding firm to her religious convictions before one so prepossessed against them might, she felt,

bring her into very great trial with her much-beloved husband; unfortunately, also, George Fox, who might have spoken for himself, had gone away, for he never stayed long in one place at a time, and she would, she feared, be all alone with a set of angry ministers, saying all manner of evil things against him to prejudice the Judge, her husband.

Happily, for her, the trial was made more easy than she had feared. George Fox was at hand, having come back unexpectedly into the neighbourhood, and was actually in the house before the Judge had returned. Margaret Fell arranged for the first interview between them with great tact—a true womanly instinct—a tact which her change of faith had not destroyed, but intensified, in turning to a good cause. She let Richard Farnworth and James Naylor (his companions), who had also come there, say a word or two to the Judge as he entered. She herself greeted him with all her old affection, and took care to see that his dinner was ready, and sat with him while he ate it; and it was not until he was thoroughly rested, and had had his supper, and all the family assembled for evening worship, that George Fox, the head and front of all this change, was allowed to enter. When he did so, he came (as she says herself) without any form of compliment or gesture, as was his wont, but was soon so powerfully engaged in the ministry as to win the deep attention of all present; the Judge was at once dispossessed of the prejudices he had imbibed, and became so convinced of the soundness of George Fox's views, that, although he never himself joined the Society as a member, he was always friendly, shielded them in his judicial capacity, allowed them to

meet regularly for worship in his parlour, and used to set open (tradition says) his study door on these occasions that he might listen to their ministry. Of the rest of the company present on this remarkable occasion, nearly all became decided Friends ; the Judge's servants, both those of the farm and those in the house, joined them, as also did his conveyancing clerk. His seven daughters also became Quakeresses ; were themselves eminent in the Society, and were married eventually to some of its more prominent members.

Judge Fell was at this time a man of about sixty, and his comely spouse was considerably younger. She had married him when very young, and was now barely entering on her middle life, being about forty years old, whilst George Fox was only about twenty-six years of age.

In alluding to this evening service according to the manner of Friends, in the parlours of Swarthmore Hall, it is difficult, in respect of its influence on the development of our Society, to avoid glancing onward, however briefly, at the subsequent life of one who was chief actor in this scene—the graceful matron of the household. She was left a widow some six years afterwards by the death of the Judge, and, having passed ten years in widowhood, became united in marriage, at the ripe age of fifty-six, to George Fox, her second husband. They loved one another much, but they loved the Society they contributed to gather more than their own personal comforts, and, yielding to *its* requirements, were seldom able to pass much of their twenty years of married life together. Amid the incessant fatigues undergone for their friends' sakes.

George Fox's constitution was the first to give way, though he was ten years her junior. His indomitable spouse became thus, a second time in her life, a widow, and again passed ten more years of bereavement, dying at length, at the ripe age of eighty-eight, greatly revered by all her friends, and regarded as one to whom the Society as a Society owed much of its existence.

We dwelt at some length on George Fox's *early*, personal, heartfelt experiences, for they lay at the root of all his doctrine, and we described his conduct with some minuteness during his imprisonment at Derby, because on such early traits depends so much of the future of the man, even as foundations indicate in their lines the coming superstructure. So would we (though in no material or wordly spirit) regard Margaret Fell as the leader of that wonderful band of English matrons who, under the name of Quakeresses, have conferred, by the way they reared their families and ruled their households, such benefits upon the Church, on Society, and upon the World at large. In Her there was a deep and fervent piety, made all the more attractive because it was combined with a due attention to things practical. She had become what some would call a convert to a chief among the mystics (for such is it the practice with some writers now to call George Fox); but if so she was as practical as ever. She did not pass out of the world into any dreamy abstraction such as mysticism is held to involve. She lived on *in* the world, attended to all the duties and engagements of daily life as much as ever, but only forsook its gaiety, its merely professed religiousness

and its State ministers. As proof of her practical mind see how she cared for her first husband, Judge, in the hour of her trial, when distress of mind and gloomy apprehensions might have made her absorbed in her own feelings; she forgot not to get him his dinner or make him comfortable over his supper; no plain household duties were neglected, and it is not surprising that her husband was well content to forego the gaieties she had relinquished, seeing that the religion which had banished them had left his wife all the more practical. See also those notices Maria Webb has collected in her work on the Fell family, how all things necessary and convenient were attended to; read the letters the young preachers wrote to Margaret Fell, and those they received from her; how she cared for their *bodily* as well as their spiritual wants. Such was and ever has been true Quakerism. What a genuine touch of motherly character in that letter she wrote, many years after, to greet George Fox (then her husband) when he landed from America—a letter full of religious phraseology, in rather high-flown expressions, but withal so practical and mindful of personal attentions, as displayed in that one little sentence, “I hope thou hast received the salmon I sent thee.” Kind-hearted and good housewife thus to forward to her husband (landing from a long sea voyage), one of the sweet fresh salmon from her north-country streams!

Such combinations of the Mary and Martha spirit *she* practised and taught by her influence has remained on the religious Society she helped to organise. With what pleasure some in middle-life now look back on

times when an ancestress of the family was as great in her kitchen as in the ministers' gallery; how her composure of spirit expressed itself in the perfectness, though simplicity, of her table; how the excellence of her housewifery attracted attention to her counsels; how her drawers in fragrance of sweet lavender greeted visitors from a smoky city; what a *reverence* was put into all her work, plain household work, so that a day at "clear starching" was as religiously performed as one at any Monthly or Quarterly Meeting. The world noticed these attentions; and has not Charles Lamb, in "Elia," spoken of the Friends as "brightening at Whitsuntide the streets of the Eastern Metropolis," when to his imagination they showed like "troops of the shining ones." Alas! this state of things has very much gone—the railways have broken up that old simple country Quaker-life Margaret Fell and her successors lived for so many generations; the system of the day is changed; town life is in the ascendant; household work done by proxy! Happily the descendants of her community have the Poor they can care for, and that they do care for these their Mission work all over the country is a cheering and convincing proof of their practical religion.

But we must revert to the visit of George Fox to Swarthmore Hall and the North-Western counties. It is to be observed as its chief result that a number of young men appeared ready to go forth and preach his views. They were persons of talent, some in a good position of life—about sixty in number—men of education, great eloquence, and all fervent in the adoption of views they esteemed as a new life. Full

thereof they were ready to go forth and "sound ! sound !" (as George Fox said) "the day of the Lord." These earnest disciples shrank from no difficulty or danger, lived lives of incessant toil, endured imprisonment and hardships of all kinds, and not a few suffered in dungeons even unto death.

"The Lord" (George Fox says) "had said unto me, if but one man or woman were raised up by His power to stand and live in the same spirit that the prophets and apostles were in who gave forth the Scriptures, that man or woman should shake all the country in their profession for ten miles round." He himself had gone forth in that spirit, and the Northern counties *had* been shaken; there were now threescore men like-minded with himself, ready to go out, two and two, to all parts of England. How they did so—how all England was shaken, and Quakerism sprang forth almost at once, to be a large community—needs some separate notice of the sixty early preachers, and the peculiar state the times were in when their message was given. But this we reserve to our next lecture.

Last time we left George Fox in a prison—illtreated as a blasphemer and nicknamed a "Quaker." This time we cease when he is become the acknowledged head of a fervent band. The three years of his solitary ministry have borne fruit; and what that fruit produced in a more general conversion will have next to be entered upon.

How eloquently and poetically Charles Wesley, in his well-known hymn, expressed a century later the same aspect of truth for which George Fox and his friends so earnestly contended:—

“Come, Desire of Nations, come !
Fix in us Thy humble home !
Rise, the Woman’s conquering Seed !
Bruise in us the Serpent’s head !
Now display Thy saving power,
Ruined nature now restore,
Now in mystic union join
Thine to ours, and ours to Thine !

“Adam’s likeness, Lord efface ;
Stamp Thy image in its place ;
Second Adam from above
Reinstate us in Thy love !
Let us Thee, though lost, regain
Thee the Life, the Heavenly Man :
O ! to all Thyself impart,
Formed in each believing heart !”

LECTURE III.

THE time when Friends as a Society suddenly appeared was thus one of social strife and disorganisation unparalleled in England by any that had occurred since she had become a Christian nation. She was, for the moment, turned Republican, and many of her ancient and time-honoured Institutions had been overthrown, or were for a time in abeyance. It was a day of Crisis and of Storm in Social, Political, and Religious life—the ripening fruit of Centuries of discontent ; a period when the waters of strife, long heaped up in threatening volume, *broke* (under the mismanagement of a bigoted, weak, and vacillating Monarch) those barriers which had hitherto—though barely—restrained their force, and, under the torrent, himself and his Church were found to have been overwhelmed in their sudden outburst. Amidst this ruin fallen on Church and Throne was seen the struggling life of Sects *united* to give the blow that let loose the storm, but disconnected, and contending the one among the other over the fallen Fabric their acts had helped to overturn. Amid these men, heated in battle and controversy, and in this time of social disorganisation, came forth the words from George Fox and his friends: “Peace! be still! Ye warriors, ye seekers after truth—be still! The Lord, whom ye seek, is not in the whirlwind nor the storm, but in the still small voice He is to be found, and *within* you—yea, in the secret of

your own hearts: there must you His presence greet, and wait patiently if you would realise it." Many and many a time has the word of life been spoken to the nations, yet never, perchance, was a word more fitly spoken than that proclaimed by the Friend, as with the voice of a prophet and the sound of a trumpet, to England, filled from shore to shore with struggling, contending sects—"Be still! Wait on the Lord, and receive His spirit *within* you."

To comprehend the forces that had made this storm needs some review, however slight, of the religious history of England during the hundred years preceding, that we may remember the causes of this National religious outburst under the unfortunate Charles the First.

Looking back, then, from the days of the Stuarts to those of the *Tudors*, we find these *latter* princes engaged in settling a reformed Church system on a basis so *broad* that they hoped all Englishmen might unite therein, becoming one, both as a *Church* as well as a Nation. For this ideal the Tudor dynasty strove, hoping, on the one hand, to *embrace* various different phases of religious thought in the doctrines and practice of their State-Church; and having thus, as they deemed, given sufficient latitude, compel all else either to conform or leave the kingdom.

If such was their object, it is needless to say they did not succeed. Their endeavour to comprehend as many as possible is to be seen in the constitution of the Church they thus founded, which is still distinguished by its blending, under one organisation, widely differing views, giving rise to the oft-made remark that her

Liturgy or Service is Popish, her Thirty-nine Articles Calvinistic, and her creed Lutheran.

True, the zealous Reformers under Edward the Sixth hoped for a narrower, and, as they thought, a *purser* basis, for a National Church; but the violent reaction in favour of Popery under Queen Mary taught the necessity of compromise, and in such a spirit Elizabeth endeavoured to establish the Episcopal Church as a National Institution.

Not only in doctrine and ritual is this compromise apparent, but the English Church exhibits in its outward arrangement a blending of various features, each of which may be held in harmony, but is liable by any partiality toward one or the other to be brought into *contrast*, if not into *opposition*. Among these different functions of the Church thus sought to be *blended* are notably the two of which the Altar and the Pulpit are the respective representatives. In *theory* the Roman Catholic Church had it is true blended these, having in all her places of worship a pulpit as well as an altar, but in *practice* the altar had received more honour than the pulpit, and the Reformation had mainly for its endeavour the restoration of an Equality between the two, to show that the Preacher was an office as high as the Priest. In Israel of old we see these two lines of office clearly marked, liable in times of declension to fall asunder into a divergence, but never more individually effective than when, through periods of revival, the Prophet and the Priest were in harmony.

Elizabeth and her statesmen fondly hoped by their broad spirit of comprehension to have included both lines of religious thought, and to have found men of

habit and discipline and men of poetic fervour and prophetic spirit, those that followed the Priest and his Liturgies, and the men that followed the Preacher and his Scriptures, work in harmony within the border of the now re-established Protestant Episcopal English Church; and so, for a time, while the dread of foreign interference to re-establish Popery pressed upon the land, minor differences *were* forgotten. But as the threatening cloud of Spain's invading ships scattered before the storms and sank beneath the waters, Englishmen, with the removal of the common danger, lost their desire for a religious unity that was to be had only at the cost of relinquishing their religious convictions. Indeed, the genius of Protestantism, to which the nation had committed itself, is not favourable to an outward conformity in religious questions; its principle being that each man (as *individually* responsible) must think for himself, and act as his own conscience, and not a mere State-Church, may dictate or prescribe. Hence, the spirit of compromise—on which alone it was possible for Elizabeth and her ministers to settle a Church with any appearance of a National Institution—became distasteful, and even apparently sinful, to large sections of her subjects, and all the more so when the motive for union to keep out the Roman Catholic power they all detested was passed away.

It was then there became apparent a divergence as between the men of the Altar and the men of the Pulpit, taking, as they fell asunder into controversy, the name of the Episcopalian party on the one hand, and the Puritan section on the other; a divergence defined by broad lines of distinction, as they came out into pro-

minence about a century before the time of George Fox. But that which then became so marked had its root at the dawn of the Reformation, and existed in the differing *tone* of thought of the two master-minds that led out the European nations from religious bondage to free thought. Its germs were in *Luther* and *Calvin* themselves.

Luther was a monk, a *priest*; Calvin, a doctor of laws, a *minister*. Luther strove to honour the altar as well as the pulpit; but Calvin was willing to speak of the altar as a *table* in magnifying the power of the *pulpit*. Englishmen of the Episcopalian school preferred Luther; Englishmen of the Puritan stamp adhered to Calvin; and in the controversy the original difference of the two leaders became exaggerated. The men following Luther became more exclusively followers of the altar, and those maintaining Calvin's views more attached to the pulpit. In each, of course, was life; eminent godly men were on either side, but it was a time when church *practices* and ordinances were regarded as *essential* to salvation, and consequently differing views as to *them* made bitter hostilities.

If we look first at the Episcopalian party as it existed in the time of Elizabeth and the Stuarts, we find them attaching much importance to Rites and Ceremonies and to Tradition—the Altar was still an altar, the parson a priest, his liturgy a Sacrifice, though of prayer and praise, not of blood. True the one great Sacrifice was admitted to have been offered, and henceforth there was no more bloodshedding on the altar; but they held that as the great Offering had been *foreshadowed* by outward sacrifice, so now was it to be brought into *remembrance* by spiritual *sacrifice*, performed before an outward altar and

a ministering priest in a *sacred* place—*i.e.* the church and its sanctuary. Hence the varied degrees of officiating priests rising upward to the *lord* bishops (and archbishops, over all); hence the honour and titles given them, their great social position and substantial revenues; hence, as *sacrificers*, were they clothed in the white garments of officiating Priests. Well might such honour be given; for to Episcopalians the priest was a living *power*, a descendant and inheritor of true spiritual and apostolic functions, the channel of communication between the visible and the invisible—the heavens above and the world below,—they were a power on high to the heart within. All Divine communications (in their important developments) came, according to Episcopalian theory, through the priest, and in virtue of his service at the Altar. The supposed benefit was open to all classes, embracing all ages and conditions of men. None were too poor or too rich, too learned or too ignorant, too old or too young, but might come within the Priest's influence. The unconscious infant, barely awakened to its first cry, if brought by faithful sponsors to him, received, by *his* recitations, *his* handlings, and his *sprinkling*, the inestimable privilege of escape from the curse of Adam's race, and was assumed as new-born to an inheritance in the life to come. And as at the opening of life, so in the hour of death, a priest, by his particular offices, could give a consolation no other than a priest could impart; and when friends and relatives gathered round the opened earth, to hear "ashes to ashes" and the earth fall on the lowered coffin, they went away in better hope, if but the *priest* read from his book how the dear deceased had gone from a world of trouble to

one of joy. He was a social religious necessity ;—called, as such, to the weddings as to the funerals—able to make in the eyes of Society, of twain, one in Holy Matrimony if they but came before the altar in his church. And there, too, as the trials of life were being undergone, did he assemble his congregation ; and if *he* but blessed the wine and broke the bread, the elements, material in their outward form, were inward in their spiritual power ; and, by the priest's services, divine grace flowed, forgiveness was felt, and power for leading a better life. Thus the new birth given by the Church at baptism, was sustained by fresh flowings-forth of divine grace, in answer to a use of the appointed means. Whilst all was not as of man, but of God, yet it was a belief that by men appointed in this particular way divine grace came. Hence the dignity of the priest ; hence the value of his *services* ; hence the term of "sacrament" applied to them—being administered by such men having as it is assumed Apostolic succession.

In strong contrast to these, were the views held on such questions by the Puritan party. The Bible was *their* text-book ; Tradition and the Fathers they esteemed of small value. To them the exhortations of the Pulpit were of much more value than any performance of Rite or Ceremony. By these they strove to awaken the conscience, inform the mind, influence the judgment, and amend the life. They preached much, prayed long, expounded Scripture ; and for a time it was within *their* ranks that the more earnest and learned of the divines were generally to be found. To such, rite and ceremony had no saving efficacy because they held the former

legal dispensation had passed away. Thus liturgies and set forms of prayer were discarded by them, with the use of any formal service. Hence their objection to the use of the white robe surplice, as indicating a sacrificing priest. Hence to them the Lord's Supper was taken *sitting*, as at a commemorative meal, and not *kneeling*, as at a sacrament. Hence, also, with them the *altar* was not an altar, but a communion-table, the officiator a *Minister* not a Priest.

Such differing views on Church questions led also to differing views of life, in which the sacramentarian, or man of the altar, favoured a more *cheerful*, and the Puritan a more *sedate* behaviour. The man of the altar, saved (as he believed) from destruction by his baptism, become a member, by this rite, of a redeemed Church—ever able to partake of the spiritual blessings which, in virtue of his Church-membership, flowed to him through her sacraments—had (so he deemed) every reason to rejoice; and if but some portions of his Sabbath were spent in devotional exercises, he was free to enjoy and make the best of life for the rest; believing that, as the wise man of old said, there was a time for all things: a time to be merry and a time to be sad; a time to mourn and a time to dance; so with *these* men, sports and pastimes, even on the Sabbath, had as much place as solemn devotions. To the Puritan, life wore a more sober aspect; he had no faith in his godfather's having saved him by a baptism. To him the world was an evil world, and there was a "wrath to come" from which he longed to be delivered; he looked to a personal and conscious faith in a Redeemer for salvation, and desired to spend his time while in the world not in the spirit thereof but

in holy fear, in sobriety, and constant watchfulness. Very strictly therefore did he rule his house, maintaining great parental awe over his children, excluding games and sports, keeping the Sabbath as a very holy day ; yet indulging in some innocent recreations, and ever showing a talent for trade, united too often with a love for the acquisition of wealth.

Such were the differing lines of thought as between the men of the Altar and the men of the Pulpit, upholders—the one of the *priest* in the white robe, and the other of the *preacher* of the black gown—and these were barely kept together even under Queen Elizabeth's broad comprehension. The first great divergence occurred under her successor, when a matter of practice in Church discipline became the cause of a contention that severed the hitherto nominally united Church.

The question was one having relation to the mode of appointing persons to the ministry, and the ruling over the Church. According to *Episcopal* views this is done by the bishops, who virtually owe their appointment to the king as head of the Church, but once so appointed all ecclesiastical power flows through them : they appoint the minister ; their touch and their words make of a man a priest ; they are the head and fountain of spiritual authority in the Church. This ecclesiastic spirit seemed both narrow and unscriptural to the Puritan, and among them arose a great and powerful party, who advocated as a ruling power in the Church, Councils, formed not only of clergymen but Laymen ; and, to induct a brother into the ministry, not a bishop only but several clergymen had to unite and together lay their hands on his head. The councils were arranged in

various ascending degrees of power, so as to embrace the representation of all congregations: these appointing deputies, and so rising in an elaborate system of Church organisation, in which elders and laymen had an equal share of power and authority with clergymen; so they were called Presbyters and known as the Presbyterian party. These became so strong that at James's accession they hoped for a formal recognition of their position by the State—and thereby enjoy an incorporation in its State-Church with the revenues thereof. But James the First, though a Presbyterian himself when in Scotland, where Presbyterianism was the ruling Church, took a decided view in favour of Bishops when he came to England, and, after a mere pretence of giving the Presbyterians a hearing, plainly told them he should settle the English Church on an Episcopalian basis, and if they would not conform they must leave the kingdom; and so they did, Presbyterians and Pilgrim Fathers going off in successive emigrations, and America arose in consequence.

But there was another section of the Puritan party which must also be noticed by us—for all the Puritans were not Presbyterians; if we thought so, we should forget a large and powerful section that differed widely from them, though ready to unite against Popery and against High Churchism; this party was known as the Independents, or, as they prefer to be called, Congregationalists. We trace them back as far as the times of Elizabeth, so that they are one of the earliest of the English sects, and we find them to have arisen from the line of thought on Church questions taken by one Robert Brown, a man nearly connected to Lord Burleigh,

the Queen's great statesman. Brown, who for a time gave his name to his party, taught that no Christian Church was such, except it was composed of really *converted* persons, and that these, wherever they might be, and no matter how *small* in number, made a Church if they chose to meet together.

Being so, they could discharge all Church functions themselves. It was with *them* to appoint anyone as a minister, and their doing so made him what he was, as a head to their congregation, and their vote could as readily unmake as make him. With them, when in Church assembled, rested all the power to decide on the admission of persons to their Church fellowship; and each of these Churches was complete in itself, thus were they very unlike the Presbyterian system, in which to make a Church *congregations* must be united together. The Brownists, Independents, or Congregational—for all three names apply to the same sect—believed each congregation, if composed of real believers, was in itself a Church, and as independent of any other Church as one hive of bees is of another, although the hives be on the same stand; hence their name of Independents. Thus, with them a Church need not be a historic traditional Church (as the Episcopalian spoke of), nor be part of a highly organised community, as the Presbyterian believed, but any number of real believers banded together were in *themselves* a Church, and could make their own officers and their own minister as readily as (using again the same simile) a hive of bees can organise itself and make its queen. And again, if differences should arise, they can swarm off and found a new cause, just as these wonderful

insects do when *their* hives are unsettled. Thus it is that one Independent congregation has proved the parent hive to multitudes of others, each one settling down on its own individual organisation, complete as a congregation, no one community having power over the other; and thus arises also the term they themselves prefer to be called by, of *Congregationalists*.

We have said the members must be believers; on this they lay great stress, requiring from each candidate for admission a full declaration of his faith and religious experience, and declining all with whom they may not be satisfied. The stress thus laid by the Independent on the necessity of change of heart and individual conversion as a qualification for Church membership, will introduce us with a natural sequence to the question on which such serious differences arose as to cause the secession of large numbers of their followers, who assumed, in distinction, the name of Baptist. The question in dispute was as to the *manner* in which such persons were to be admitted to Church membership. Herein lay the difference, that whilst the *Independents*, having satisfied themselves as to the genuineness of the *conversion* of the applicant, notified their acceptance by recording him as a Church member; the Baptist denied Church membership except they would submit to a *public* baptism. Herefrom came a wide divergence as to the time *when*, as well as the manner *how*, the rite should be administered. The *Independent* was willing to let infants have its benefit, which the Baptist wholly denied, as being—according to their conviction—both unscriptural and superstitious, and attaching a meaning to the ceremony unwarranted in

the New Testament and a relic of a *priestly* sacrament.

The Baptist considered the rite as a sign of a covenant between contracting parties, one being the person seeking admission, and the other the Church granting it. Hence such a seal, to be valid, must be performed upon persons of full age, and such as the Church has convinced itself are really *converted* persons, and consequently suitable for enrolment among the faithful. Such precautions they deemed the primitive Church to have used, as, notably, when Philip baptised the eunuch, and Paul the gaoler; each having first made a confession of faith before the baptism; and so with Peter, who, when at the centurion's house a company was assembled to meet him, reserved all thought of their baptism until he saw signs of their conversion and faith. Thus did the Baptists, supported by Scriptural precedents, regard the rite—thus did they require signs of conversion in the applicant; and when, satisfied as to these, they granted baptism, it was done by *immersion* from head to foot, and in the presence of the assembled congregation into which the admission was thus made.

There is no doubt that this entire relinquishment of any *sacramental* value in the rite led those who held these views to far deeper searching of heart than if they thought themselves to have been cleansed from original sin in their infancy; so the Baptists were, as a class, very earnest in seeking salvation, and the great mental struggles they underwent stand portrayed in vivid lines in that wonderful work of the great Baptist, who, in "Pilgrim's Progress" has traced

out the way from the Land of Destruction to the Celestial City.

They engaged in close searching of Scripture, and sought out for themselves true *Scripture* precedents, for all they did, not only as to baptism but as to their other Christian conduct. Thus were they led to peculiar views on the mode of taking the communion, the observance of the Lord's-day, the avoidance of vain customs, plainness of dress and language, and sobriety in general conduct and deportment.

In all countries, and at all times since the Reformation, have these Baptist views prevailed, and been held at times in a manner that has brought them into reproach. Such was it at Munster in the days of Luther when the Baptists committed fanatical excesses, due to an assumed permission for the Saints to reign on the earth; but more often have they been sufferers rather than offenders, and no persecutions are so prominent as those waged against Baptists in all countries for their denial of *priestly* sacramental efficacy in baptism, and relying on faith in the meritorious sacrifice of our Lord alone. Such does not suit High Churchmen, who regard their sacraments as the *medium* of grace, and the poor Baptist has had many a rough usage and weary imprisonment at their hands. During the time of the Civil War these views had come into great prominence among the Parliamentary party, and most of the leading members of the Parliamentary party, and some of their best men, were Baptists.

This survey, brief and sadly imperfect, of the stream of religious thought and practice in England, as it flowed down during the century from Elizabeth to

Charles I., has shown us how the stream, issuing from the reservoir of Roman Catholicism, had separated into varying channels ; and no greater divergence in those streams could be conceived as between Christian Churches, than that expressed by the Episcopalian on the one hand and the Baptist on the other. We may say of them, the one dwelt on the Church the other on the Individual.

A Churchman, as a *Churchman*, would magnify his Church and glorify *her* victories, and rejoice in being one with *her* in all her triumphs ; the Baptist is found dwelling on *personal* experience, on individual conflict and personal victories. Thus does old John Bunyan, in his matchless story, make Christian enter *alone* at the wicket-gate, stand by *himself* under the threatening cliff of the law, bear his *own* burden, be *alone* at the cross, climb the Hill of Difficulty without companions, be singlehanded in his fight with the foul fiend, and *alone* in the dark valley of the shadow of death, True he has a friend in the streets of Vanity Fair, and a fellow-prisoner in the dungeon of Doubting Castle, but the individuality of the narrative is preserved, and at the last, though Hopeful enters the dark, deep river by his side, it is still on Christian and *his* conflict our interest centres—the bells in the celestial city seem to ring as for *his* reception. There have been fellowships for him in the course of his journey, true companions in travel and valuable instructions at the hands of Evangelist and Interpreter in the Beautiful House, and from the shepherds ; but withal there is no trace of being saved by *Church*-membership. It is all an *individual* work ; the need is personal, so also is the help

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given. Christian personally, and when alone, perceives his Saviour, personally receives the robe and the roll from the shining ones, is personally clothed in armour, and personally fights his way onward to the end.

The prevalence of this individual responsibility—so opposite to the view of security in believing just what a *Church* may think right—receiving as we have noted the development known by the names of Independent, and, more especially, Baptist, led also to an Unsettlement, much prevailing in the days of George Fox, which expressed itself in a *mass of persons* among whom there was no *cohesion* at all—who might have been, and most of them had been, in one or other of the sects, but were become dissatisfied, restless, taking up first with one man and then with another.

The times were become those of incohesion and of disintegration. In fact the great sects we have named—Presbyterian, Independents, and Baptists—were wanting in national status; they were without chapels of their own, for they had no legal position; the law recognised only the Episcopalian, the others had to live by sufferance and to worship as best they could. The Presbyterian, long debarred the legal pulpit, was generally chaplain to some nobleman, who would open his house to his neighbours; and if in towns (where the Presbyterian party were often very strong), the Town Hall or the halls of trading companies were generally used; the Independent and the Baptist met more often in private houses belonging to some wealthier member of the congregation, or in some barn, or warehouse. Chapels, such as we now understand them, there were none, and Acts of Parliament had long existed compelling people to go to church.

The success of the Parliamentary party under Cromwell had, of course, changed the ascendancy from the Church to the Sects; but these contended so much over the distribution of the benefices and preferments that nothing could be called settled.

Thus it was not a time of settled congregations, but rather of unsettled persons—each earnest one trying different ways to see where he could discover peace, and too many, alas, giving heed to wild fancies, and forming all kinds of extravagant sects—notably so the wild group who passed by the name of Ranters. To them—as was observed on a former occasion—the highest authority was their own *natural* light, and their freedom was to do just what their own personal inclination dictated; and if they only *felt* it right, the act was no sin; and the greatest folly, and even abominable wickedness, was, under this plea, sanctioned among them.

Truly the streams of religious and social life have, like the rivers, their rapids and waterfalls, where the waters in their maddening rush become blended in a seething mass of roaring foam. Far down perchance in the depths beneath pass off currents that have clashed together in the wildness of the hurried descent—and we see them streaming on into their own channels, yet leaving oft a swirling mass of water eddying round, uncertain whither to wend its course. In this strife of religious parties we see as it were the Churchman distinguished in the cataract, flowing forth—rallying to his Pulpit and his Altar with the shepherding watchward of—“Mother Church, Mother Church; grace, grace is in her!” and then there goes by the Independent and Baptist, denying the Altar, but cherishing the Pulpit, and magnifying Scripture as the great guide, appealing in

all things to the Book as the sole record of the Divine will, and able to make wise unto salvation through faith. But what shall happen to that vast mass of former Church followers, detached from various communities by controversy, and left swirling in uncertainty from the violence of the strife?

A gathering light is about to be held forth, vivifying both; not a Church, not a Book, but an *inward* principle—even the Spirit of Truth that shall guide them into all truth (and the men who shall hold out this light were to become known as Quakers by the world and as Friends among themselves). The light was to be the light of the Holy Spirit—not as found in decrees, councils, rites, and ceremonies (they were *without* the man); not as comprised in words of Holy Scripture—the Independent and Baptist upheld these), but found in the heart, a Divine gift, to which the *Scripture* gave witness, and the true *Church* testified, but one which until George Fox came forth had not been duly perceived by either of the contending parties.

LECTURE IV.

WE have, on two several occasions, pursued the career of George Fox, to the time when, whilst preaching in the North and North-West of England, he met with such acceptance in his ministry as to be thenceforward found at the head of a new religious movement, with followers strong in their allegiance to his views of Scripture truth, and earnest in making them known throughout the rest of England.

To this point in George Fox's history we had come, having tracked him thither from his youth upward. We saw him begin fervently to preach, and yet patiently to suffer; and we left him on the first occasion in a dungeon in the Town of Derby. On next resuming his life we saw him come forth from the prison-house—in power; and we dwelt on the personal qualities, manner, and appearance, of one so much beloved by many, so bitterly hated by his opponents—we left him (a young man of thirty) in the parlours of Swarthmore Hall, and proposed to refrain from again resuming an account of his life until we had seen who were the sixty that went forth at that time to promulgate the views of Christian Truth he had originated; but before doing so our time was spent (as on the last occasion) in an endeavour to realise the state of religious parties and sects in England, that we might see the soil on which the threescore missionaries scattered their seed.

It will not be necessary for us to recapitulate the points then developed, except so far as to recall to remembrance how it was shown—that the time was one of great excitement in Religion as well as in Politics; how the nation had overthrown the *Church*, its Prayer Book and Bishops, as well as the *King*; that it was at this time without any settlement in religious questions, being in stern and vehement debate as to what Church the nation, as a nation, should sanction. We saw how religious inquiry had developed Sects—and the leading features of each received allusion, amid which it was noticeable that the Scriptures had come to the front, and were considered the rule and guide in all Church questions by the men who, in Cromwell's time, had won his battles, and were now in political power.

It is impossible to over-estimate the influence this Book had had in England; how it had won its way to the hearts of all, its words become "household words," its teachings the rule and guide of men as individuals, as families, as societies, and as a nation. By its influence as confronted with the Fathers and Tradition had arisen the conflict of Altar and Pulpit; and we brought our review of the contest up to the time when the advocates of the Pulpit were become, for a short time, dominant in the land; the Altar was overthrown, its services prohibited, its ministers unbeneficed; the bishops dismissed, and an archbishop had been beheaded as a traitor on Tower Hill. Stern days those! a conflict carried on, not by word only, but by force,—a day in which the sword had been appealed to as the arbiter, and the award had fallen for a time to the success of the Sects, the men of the Pulpit and its ministry.

It was amongst such violent controversial men our early preachers had to go forth, with, as may be expected, their liberties, and even their lives in their hands.

We instinctively seek for the causes which produce effects, and no remembrance, however slight, of the religious parties in England two centuries ago, can fail to awaken in our minds the inquiry, What occasioned all this turmoil and strife? In vain do we find an adequate cause in the behaviour of royalty; the Throne was not found erring in going beyond its traditional powers, but only striving to keep them. The Church was the same as with the King. It was no worse as an institution, but, on the whole, better than it had been under the Tudors, and yet Henry VIII., Elizabeth, and even James I., had preserved their throne and their church; what then had made the Pulpit stride forth now and overthrow the Altar?

It was, we may without any hesitation say, caused by the religious zeal awakened in the *people generally* by a knowledge of the Bible. It had brought to them new views of religion; it had become essential to their religious *life*. And so, in proportion, they less valued the Church, its traditions, its service, its ritual, its altar. The Bible having become their *light*, they the less needed a priest, with sacraments and mediations. The Book—long buried in the chests of monasteries and convents, translated from the original by men who lost their lives in the attempt, and printed and published at last under Royal permission—had become rendered into an English deep in its rhythm, full in its power, irresistible in its influence alike on the educated and the unlearned. The Bible was now become a household book, and it proved, there can be no

doubt, the chief power wielded from the Pulpits that overthrew the Altars. Were the men who did so themselves right? Did *they* really understand the Scriptures? George Fox thought them very poor interpreters. "Empty casks," "lumps of earth," were some of his expressions towards them. They certainly did not agree among themselves, and we may perceive that the Bible was really the ground of the contention, to know what *were* its teachings and requirements.

Being so, we may follow the thought a little further, and, by seeing in what manner it was the custom of the men of the Pulpit to regard the Scriptures, shall discern the *ground* of the antagonism the Friends had against these violent Preachers. Their sects were for a time in political supremacy, and the priest (strictly so-called) was dismissed; but the minister was exalted instead, and wished to be called a teaching priest. That was his asked-for distinction. Not a sacrificing priest, for such he abjured; but a *teaching* priest, was what he aspired to be. And the land was filled with so-called teaching priests.

The Sects had not, by these views, relinquished the *mediating* office. A man was still necessary to his fellow-man for religious guidance; but the officiator was regarded as a teacher and expounder, and the Bible was the text. Able preachers uprose, who evolved, from Scripture narratives and Scripture texts, sermons hour after hour in length—subdivided into periods, elaborate in argument, eloquent in appeal, earnest in personal application. Preaching spread even unto overflowing; Lay ministry, too, abounded, until every man with a religious turn of mind, a ready wit and utterance, was

become a preacher. Even colonels of the army gave sermons, and were as much esteemed in the pulpit for their Scripture knowledge and eloquence as they were for their strategy and bravery on the field of war. Biblical phraseology had become the vernacular of large classes of the English, and the most earnest of the people did endeavour to follow out, as to the letter of Scripture, the instructions of Moses as to the Law: "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind then for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up." The serious people in these times sought in all things to carry Scripture into outward practice: they named their children Bible names, they spoke of everyday things in Bible terms: their church was a Zion; a company of the faithful, the Heavenly Jerusalem. They went to battle with texts as their rallying-cries; and Cromwell—well understanding the temper of the times—gave out, on an occasion of great strait, as his watchword, "The Lord of Hosts;" when his troops, inflamed with religious zeal, gained for him, under that battle-cry, the decisive victory of Dunbar.

No one who has, even in the slightest way, gone backward 200 years, and tried to picture those times, but must have noticed how this Book—then comparatively new to the bulk of Englishmen—had coloured all their language, and influenced all their ideas, and moulded all their lives.

It was from amongst men reverencing the Bible, that

George Fox, the martyr-descended youth, arose. It was among men throughout all England glorying in the Bible that the sixty Quaker preachers went forth—and the battle raged, there can be no doubt, on the right position of the Scriptures. Both parties fought out their controversies with mental swords; the Friend said, My weapon is the sword of the Spirit; And mine (said the opponent) is the Word of God, which is the Scripture.

Before we further notice the collision, and the grounds of their debate, we may allude, in a few general terms, to these ardent missionaries themselves who thus went forth as pioneers of a new form of faith, from the Northern parts. George Fox says, in his Journal, there were no less than some sixty of them from this district alone. It is possible yet to trace out from contemporary papers most of their names. The lives of some are famous in our Society's annals! and the dying scenes and sayings of many, are they not to be found in the early volumes of "Piety Promoted!"—The Friends' Book of Saints.

The group which thus spread themselves abroad in the land were moved to do so, like the disciples of old, by the uprising of great persecution in their native districts. They were all men of considerable mental power; some of good education, others possessed of but little learning. There were amongst them those trained for the law, those who had been preachers already, those who had been country gentlemen, those who were farmers or yeomen on their own lands. Several of them were married men, most were unmarried. Some were persons of estate, and others had their charges found them.

They all travelled simply, mostly two and two together, lived abstemiously, and seldom rode horses. The distances they accomplished, which were great, were on foot (England had not then even stage-coaches to assist the traveller).

If there was great difference amongst these sixty in their acquirements, their training, and social position in life, so was there in their age, their manner, powers, and physical form. Many were quite young; some, such as Edward Burrough, not out of their teens; most of them were about thirty, few, very few, over forty; men in the prime of their day, fitted for the hardships they had to encounter; men who carried no luggage with them; lived from house to house; often fasted for need of food; hardy soldiers, valiants in the Lord's army. Some of them were fine large men, but of not a few it is mentioned in their biographies that they were small of stature, and weakly in constitution. Some, like Francis Howgill, Edward Burrough, and James Naylor, were mighty in speech, warm in controversy, Sons of Thunder in debate; others, like Thomas Aldam, William Dewsbury, and Alexander Parker, were more remarkable for a calm, earnest bearing; and of some it is said they were slow of speech, though weighty in matter.

It would be wearisome to give a list of the names of these men, most of whom are unknown, except to those few who have looked into Quaker biography; but some of the group rose to such eminence that he is not worthy to bear the name of Friend to whom they are not familiar. William Dewsbury, for instance, the persuasive preacher and patient sufferer, who, imprisoned

for many long years in Warwick Gaol, said, "its stone walls were as nothing, for his spirit was free;" and the bolts and bars of the doors, he adds, were "radiant as jewels," because closed on him in the cause of truth. Thomas Aldam, who braved the ire of the great Protector, and, as he found him unyielding when he pleaded the cause of his suffering friends, tore a linen cap before him, and declared so should the Lord rend his kingdom from him and his. Then Francis Howgill, learned and eloquent, blameless in life and conversation, left to die in Appleby Gaol, where he laid down his life after years of cruel imprisonment, but rejoicing to the last in the spirit; and Edward Burrough, head among all, in zeal, in power, and self-sacrifice, the Quaker apostle of London, who encountered rude mobs, subdued wise notionists by his forcible eloquence, and died a martyr in a cell of Newgate, the victim of intolerable persecution. Poor James Naylor, the Yorkshire yeoman, tragic in his brief career, the greatest orator of the group, and, alas! the one—the only one of the sixty—whose feet slipped to a greivous fall.

But here we may well pause, and, turning from the men themselves, ask, What was it against which they had to lift up their voice—what was their objection? Was it Superstition?—*that* Luther had cried out against, and it was gone; the monks were no more; and the Pope (as John Bunyan said) was a toothless old giant, that gave Christian no more cause of fear than old Giant Pagan, who sat mumbling by his side; it was not the Church of Rome they opposed, for that Church was proscribed. Was it the Church of England?—no; for she had, as we have seen, fallen, though but for a

moment. It was among sects who had been the fiercest opponents of all popery, priestcraft, and superstition, that these Friends went forth to find fault; among men who had the Bible, *read* the Bible, *knew* the Bible, lived by it, fought by it, died by it; its words were ever on their tongues, and its imagery pervaded their whole lives.

What, then, could be found fault with in such men honouring the Book of Books so highly? The cause of difference is easy to be perceived mentally, though it may be difficult to describe in words. The Presbyterians, the Independents, and the Baptists (the men then in power), grasped the Bible with their minds just as they handled it with their hands. It was to them a power; but a power because it touched their keenest feelings, kindled their highest hopes, cheered them by its counsel, and, as they believed, lit up and led them on the path to glory. Thus, be it observed, was it an *external* influence working on the mind, just as electricity or some such force would on the body; and their faith was an external faith—a faith as external as ever was a crusader's in the localities of Palestine.

Even the most strict and serious among them were serious and strict in the same direction. It was an outward influence. The word was grasped by the mind; rejoiced in by the intellect; by it the current of thought was changed, the affections warmed: but still it was outward, and the hopes it awakened were outward and future. The judgments it denounced were to them prospective; they spake of the glorious City it promised, talked in anticipative joy of its golden gates, its walls, its inhabitants, and the King in His beauty, but it was to

them a land very far off, and all to come, and the day of judgment was sure, but not then begun. Here are three stanzas from a cotemporary poet of the time which may illustrate this style of religious thought:—

“ Sweet place, sweet place alone,
The Court of God Most High,
The Heaven of Heavens, the Throne
Of spotless majesty !

“ The stranger homeward bends,
And sigheth for his rest,
Heaven is my home, my friends,
Lodge there in Abraham's breast.

“ Earth's but a sorry tent,
Pitch'd for a few frail days—
A short-leased tenement—
Heaven's still my song, my praise !”

Meanwhile they spake as men admitted into the very secrets of Heaven, professed to unfold the Divine counsels, discern between the elect few and the unchosen multitude—assured *themselves* of safety, and meted out destruction on all who saw not Truth with the same colourings as themselves.

Men were not then content to investigate the laws of Nature and speculate on origin of species, but professed to understand the Divine ordering of all things, and the greatest poet of the time chose for his theme, not the Idylls of a king and the troubles of an earthly and half-civilised kingdom, but boldly ascended upward to

speak of the wars of principalities and powers and the struggles of spiritual wickedness in high places.

What a wonderful possession is the Bible! how worthy of the regard these men had come to pay to it! Who can too highly prize, too greatly honour it? And yet George Fox and his early preachers stepped boldly forward among these men, brimming over with Bible lore, and said: "You are wrong, you are *wrong*;" and we, if we are Friends in deed, as in name, believe he and they were right, and made good their accusation.

Not that they, the early Friends, *dishonoured* the Scriptures—far from it, for they had gotten a personal knowledge of the words of Scripture, wonderful to observe in men who had not been trained for the ministry. Not that they dropped the Scriptures—they always had their Bibles about them, and freely made use of them in every debate.

In what, then, lay the divergence from apparently a common basis? It was this. George Fox and his friends believed that for a man to be a *Christian* believer each one must *personally* (not as a Church, but *individually*, in his own heart,) undergo a similar work *inwardly*, as the Jew, whose history was there recorded, had experienced *outwardly*. Thus knowing the Law with its terrors and judgment to have its day, and be to him personally as a schoolmaster; and abiding as to the flesh under the wrath and judgment of the Lord—coming down into the condemnation unto death—know true life arise; and find the Gospel fulfilled to him personally and inwardly, and know as a blessed fruit of this discipline the *Lord Jesus*

*to be raised up in his own heart, and live and dwell there by the power of the Holy Ghost.**

“ Within us, Babe divine,
Be born, and make us Thine;
Within our souls reveal
Thy love and power to heal,

Be born, and make our hearts Thy cradle and Thy shrine.”

—*Isaac Williams*, 1839.

Familiarised as these views have become to us, it seems strange to say it was to the religious men of that day as a new doctrine; they thought they held the faith as delivered to the Saints, and raged to hear the Quaker tell them they held it but in the force of their own natural will, and not by the power of God, with whose work in the heart the Friend boldly charged them as being ignorant.

In the early times of the Gospel, an Apollos—though mighty in the Scriptures—had need of being led into the way of Truth more perfectly; and those first disciples at Ephesus, though believers, were so little acquainted with the privileges purchased for the Church by the death of the Lord Jesus, that they had not even heard of there being a Holy Ghost? To one and all, the power of the Holy Ghost was unfolded as a new discovery; its baptism, administered by Christ Himself a new experience; as such it had come to George Fox himself, though a holy man and learned in the Scriptures. This baptism of the Spirit came to these Friends, his

* These lectures were given before the doctrine, as it is termed, of Scriptural Holiness had come again into so much prominence as of late years. It is the doctrine early Friends promulgated as their experience.

early companions, as a new discovery; it came before the Sectaries as a new doctrine. By it a new light was thrown on the meaning of Scripture, and the controversies of that controversial age. Hereby attention was drawn to the *inner* work, and men were exhorted to the dominion of Christ in the soul—a kingdom as *now* begun and not only a land very far off.

Religion with the Friend was not a matter of opinion—outward belief, and outward mental knowledge—but the result of a personal experience, deep, trenchant, and severe, through which he had passed, and so come into a conscious possession of Christ and the *results* of His atonement in a power over sin and temptation.

Such views are called mystical, and have been held as such, at times, in all ages of the Christian Church; they arose fresh however to George Fox, and they came fresh to his friends; they coloured all their lives, and influenced their sermons. They spoke as if the Heavenly Jerusalem was set up *within* them, and as if they had entered into the true Canaan, the land of rest, and stood in the regained Paradise of the Lord. Such style of religious thought and expression lies open, no doubt, to error in the development of the imagination; but with the *early* Friends it was associated with a *power* that “cast down all imaginations,” and kept them out of the region of mysticism to be witnesses of a real inward work. The Friend was one entirely subjected to the power of God’s Holy Spirit, or rather one that sought so to be. He believed in no way to spiritual life but through the portals of spiritual death—and that thus in time of health and strength, in the fulness of his own intellectual and moral force, not in their decay,

he had to come to this spiritual death—the death to his own conceptions, his own imaginings, his own mentally-formed ideas—death to his own *will*. This was the Friend's baptism; which he opposed to the outward baptism of the Church;—a baptism keen and severe, of which John the Baptist (well versed in outward purification) spake, when he called it a *baptism* as of *fire*. To this the Friends yielded, and this held the mystical views in balance; and one by one, there is no doubt, these earnest God-fearing, Scripture-instructed men suffered death to all their own self-confidence, their self-righteousness, and to their Scripture-learnt but self-formed faith.

In thus yielding up their will, their all, they felt they had been buried with Christ. Buried with Him in spiritual baptism—and, behold, they were risen! And, being risen, came the new view—the high view—the glorious *realisation* of the promised blessings now even in this life. Yet be it ever remembered they always preached, and submitted to bear the Cross. Their Crown was rejoiced in as a present possession in the heart, but the Cross was ever their way to it; not dangling a trinket round the neck, but a deep, severe, close, and ever-recurring trial; the Cross was daily borne, and *so* they witnessed to a daily Crown—they spake of themselves as in Paradise, but to the world it looked only as a pathway of thorns.

It was this conscious personal union with the Lord Jesus Christ that at once put the cross on their outward path. The Friend became *strict* in word and circumspect in deed—confessing to the need for constant forgiveness, yet believing in an indwelling guide, who

would lead into all holiness. Hence they could not *fight*, for the Prince of *Peace* was with them—nor Swear, for He had forbidden it. And as He was come, a High Priest of good things, and was with them and *in* them, they could not pay their fellow-men tithe, as if He was to be approached only through a priest—He himself was *the* priest, and to acknowledge any other was to derogate from His righteous prerogative. So they would pay no mere earthly ones their tithe. And He, too, the Lord within, had become their Teacher, so no need for a teaching priest, appointed by man. Ministry, to be true ministry, must arise from the same source as that which inspired the prophets of old, and it was not for man to think he could develop it by learning or education. He, as man, could but wait for it, pray for it, and recognise it when it appeared. This brought them into antagonism with the priests—the teaching priests—and as these had the secular power at command, when Friends arose they suffered severely, to the loss of property and freedom—more than a thousand of them were left in prison at the death of Cromwell.

Thus baptized into a death unto themselves, having given up all their wills, with their self-acquired knowledge of divine things, made willing to bear the cross, they witnessed to a new power, an indwelling force; and leaving house and home, wives, families, and relations, they went out to bring their fellow-men—agitated on Scripture doctrines and Church questions—to this rock of settlement : Christ within you.

In doing this, they used terms that have now become formalised in our Quaker vocabularies—terms to express an active, an all-pervading force as characteristic of the

Lord Jesus and His inner work in the soul. The churches and sects were dwelling mainly on His sufferings, His agony, His humiliation, and passion; and holding these up as an offering to a Being of wrathful look toward a fallen race. The Friend spoke mostly of the Lord as a living indwelling power, using to explain His meaning such terms as the *Life*, the *Light*, the SEED.

To thousands and thousands this news of the inner and higher life was as a healing balm; but to those who believed *not* it was as a grievous error. It seemed to them to deny the outward events, outward work, outward death, sacrifice, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and on the question whether it did or did not do so, violent controversies arose, which, when they could not be settled in argument, the side that had the magistrate with them closed it by shutting up their opponent in prison.

Such were the views the Friends proclaimed, such was the varied treatment they encountered: blessed by some, cursed by many, and heavily smitten by those in power.

If we ask where they went, the answer must be—Everywhere, so far as England is concerned; their labours receiving special development in such cities as London and Bristol, and taking also deep hold in the Eastern Counties, then the centre of much of the woollen manufacture of the kingdom.

We said a few words might be offered on this occasion as to the career of two out of the sixty preachers, similar to one another in the shortness of the period of their ministry, though very different in the causes and manner

of its termination. In visiting the ancient city of Colchester, we shall be sure to enter its Castle Yard, and although we may think first of the Romans who made it a fortress, or of the Norman who formed its massive walls, we shall be little acquainted with Quaker history if we do not ask where it was that *James Parnel* was confined. It was in a hole in the wall high up, too high for the ladder to reach. There they—the enlightened presbytery and high professors of the city—were willing to let a cruel gaoler confine an innocent lad because he was too mighty for them in religious controversy. He had come amongst them in the course of the ministry he so ardently pursued, and under an idea of crushing out what they deemed pernicious error, they had him to the magistrate, who fined him some £40 for being away from home, and then because he would not pay left him to the cruel pleasure of an inhuman gaoler to do his worst.

This youth (barely twenty when he died) was actually brought up to trial with *chains* upon him, like a felon; and had to take his stand among murderers, and the city authorities left him, when sentenced, to live as he could in a hole in the castle wall. To this he had to clamber by a piece of rope that hung above the ladder, so difficult of access that he injured his health by refraining to come down for his meals; and one day, as he clutched at the rope that hung dangling above the top round of the ladder,—his victuals in one hand and the rope end in the other,—his enfeebled grasp loosened, and he fell down on the rough stones below, and lay there as if dead. He revived, but not to receive any better care from his gaoler; his friends were denied access, all

comforts they brought never reached him, the hard-hearted gaoler seemed resolved to have his life—and in a few days more the end was reached. Unable now to ascend the ladder, they had laid him in a hole near the ground, so small it was called the Oven; and on one occasion when, cramped and weary, he had crawled for a little fresh air to the yard, his cruel keeper locked him out all night, though it was cold, snowy weather.

It was the last suffering his life could withstand, and James Parnel was no more—but the people who saw him die, heard his song as of victory even in that hour of death; and the men of Essex thought all the more of the Quakers and the truth of their views through the calm, patient sufferings of that gallant-hearted spiritually-minded youth. He was one of the best preachers as well as one of the earliest sufferers the Society had.

James Naylor's was a different case. He was a man in middle life, James Parnel but a lad; both had been converted by the preaching of George Fox: James Naylor when he heard him on his first missionary journey to the North, and James Parnel by going to visit him whilst a prisoner in the dungeon of Carlisle.

James Naylor, though not a person of education, possessed great natural ability, and had a marvellous flow of natural eloquence. Aroused by the exciting scenes of those days he had taken part in the strife, and served as a soldier in the Parliamentary army, but was returned to the farming of his own land in Yorkshire when George Fox made his acquaintance. The deep views of Gospel truth he then heard took hold of the fervid soul of James; he felt as one inspired, and hearing, as he deemed, a call to the ministry whilst out in the field

ploughing with his oxen, left all (even without going home to his own family first), and set out for his missionary career. He had great success therein; his person was imposing, his countenance beautiful,—he wore his brown hair long below the cheek,—his manner was fervent, his matter deep, and his eloquence abounding. Especially in the cities, such as London and Bristol, was his service welcomed, ever drawing crowds when it was known he was to preach—which he did in his plain Yorkshire yeoman dress. Sometimes some of the world's great ones (as they called them) would come to hear; he became a sort of Whitfield or Spurgeon in the excitement he produced; and this went on for some years until, under this popularity, James Naylor lost his footing and fell.

His leading theme had been (what we have been endeavouring to explain as the theme of the early Friends) the personal indwelling of the Lord Jesus in the soul of the believer. He enforced this to admiration, until some few foolish admirers began to look upon him as a personal representation of Christ, and, as such, to perform before him, and to him, a style of address and even adoration, that would be shocking to contemplate were it not so utterly absurd. Thus, were some women found bowing before him, and saying, "Hail, thou son of the Highest! thou bright and morning star!" They looked, as they said, to see him assume his outward glory, and went so far as to attempt a triumphal entry on horseback into Bristol. His friends were greatly distressed. George Fox, who saw before all this came on that James was going wrong, remonstrated; but he himself was in prison, and so by this time were some of

the best and wisest of the band. There was no Church Order or Discipline then among the Friends; they were in their infancy.

This entry into Bristol brought matters to a head; James was arrested, and, as he well deserved, stood his trial as a blasphemer. They never could, however, prove the charge, for he always denied that he was Christ; he said the worship was not to himself, as James Naylor, but to the measure of the Divine within. But such distinctions had no weight with matter-of-fact men, and a sentence, severe in those days, was passed and carried out. He stood twice, two hours at a time, in a pillory, and had his tongue (that eloquent tongue) bored through with a red-hot iron, and the letter B, as a blasphemer, was burnt into his noble forehead. Men stood by, but in silence; he was not hooted at, he was not pelted, he was pitied; he was so calm, so dignified, so patient, and as the red hot branding-iron hissed on his forehead, he forgivingly embraced the executioner.

But this suffering was as nothing to the flagellation that succeeded, which was done at the hands of the common hangman; 310 lashes did he receive, dragged at the cart-tail from Westminster to the City, and again—it seems hardly to be credited—was the same repeated at Bristol. The skin of his body was so gashed and cut through, it hardly held the vital organs in their places. Yet not a groan or a murmur escaped this undaunted man. He survived it all, and, best of all, saw through his darkness, condemned his conduct in tears of bitter repentance, and was thoroughly reconciled to his friends. He lived a year or two after, and was again travelling in the ministry, in the course of which his journey lay through

Huntington. There it is supposed he was attacked by some robber, for he was found, senseless and wounded, in a ditch, and taken to a Friend's house. He lingered but a little while, and expired in suffering, but at peace ; and two hours before the close, he, who had gone through so much, breathed forth the following, which his friends treasured as his passing words. With them we will also for the present, conclude :—

“ There is a Spirit which I feel
 “ that delights to do no evil
 “ nor to revenge any wrong,
 “ but delights to endure all things
 “ in hope to enjoy its own in the end.
 “ Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention,
 “ and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty,
 “ or whatever is of a Nature contrary to itself.
 “ It sees to the end of all Temptations.
 “ As it bears no evil in itself
 “ so it conceives none in thoughts to any other.
 “ If it be betrayed it bears it,
 “ for its ground and spring is the mercy and forgiveness of God.
 “ Its crown is meekness.
 “ Its life is everlasting love unfeigned.
 “ It takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention,
 “ and keeps it by lowliness of mind.
 “ In God alone it can rejoice,
 “ though none else regard it or can own its life.
 “ It is conceived in sorrow,
 “ and brought forth without any to pity it.
 “ Nor doth it murmur at grief and opposition.
 “ It never rejoiceth but through sufferings,

“ for with the world's joy it is murdered.
“ I found it *alone*, being forsaken.
“ I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens
“ and desolate places in the earth
“ Who through *Death* obtained this resurrection
“ And Eternal Holy Life.”

LECTURE V.

LET us now resume the thread of our narrative as to George Fox's career. We left him, it may be remembered, in the parlour of Swarthmore Hall, the honoured guest of its owner—an apostle of a new faith to its mistress and her household—the acknowledged head of a large, active, fervent, and intelligent group of men who, as preachers of the same views of faith and doctrine, were ready to go north, south, east and west, in the promotion of the cause to which George Fox was himself so devoted. We having traced him up to this stage, through the trials of his early life into this success of his early manhood, paused to consider, FIRST, the state of the *times* (and the differing aspect of the various religious parties); and, SECONDLY, to observe who were the men found in the dales, among the lakes, and the fells and wolds of the North—so able and so ready to go forth self-denying missionaries of the Quaker doctrine.

We, in thus proceeding, have seen the *man* at whose word it all began; how he was called, how he was fitted, the depth of his sufferings, the earnestness of his search after truth, his unhesitating obedience, his self-denying, unflinching course; and having regarded thus the instrument, have looked out also upon the soil, have traced the chief lines of its preparation,

in the ferment of the times, the unrest of the sects, the strife on all subjects—social, political, and religious; and, understanding from hence how all England was broken up into doubts and contentions, turned to see the band of youthful preachers who, quickened through the ministry of George Fox into new views of religion, went forth in ardour, freely mingled in the debates of the times, and drew everywhere, in all parts of the land, crowds of listeners, amongst whom great numbers came to be not only auditors, but confirmed and convinced adherents.

This was, as we saw, the work of the sixty preachers who, two and two, traversed England—themselves nearly all coming from the North, and nearly all at first convinced by the preaching of George Fox himself. Thus Quakerism was become a power, and had started up among the sects, which, it may be observed, severely disputed any concession of place to the new comer. All this work had begun (as to the outward) with George Fox; he had worked on, though his friends called him a madman, and opposers a blasphemous heretic; his eye had looked, yea, seen behind the vail, and, strong in faith, he had laboured moving onward, ever seeking fresh fields of labour, and in the Northern and North-West counties, had been welcomed as an apostle, and become the head of this compact, educated, and dauntless group of missionary preachers. We propose now to consider his service among them, and in doing so have under notice the question whether he who was the means of the commencement of the work was able to keep abreast of the movement now that it no longer depended on himself, but was become

identified with the labours of a large and increasing band of preaching disciples.

When George Fox first went up into the North, he had been for some ten years himself a travelling preacher, proclaiming what he believed as the truth, and warning all to repentance for sins, and newness of life, but, as we remarked, he continued alone—he founded no sect, had stirred up no preachers of the same views, to all which his experience when in the North formed a marked contrast; men here gave up their stations as preachers, or as schoolmasters, or as farmers, or as lawyers'-clerks, to go out, and sound forth in eloquent, diffusive, yet convincing discourses, the truths George Fox had delivered. He gave the germ, in their hearts it germinated, and by their ministry it was dispersed.

It was for three years George Fox was engaged in this his first visit to the North. At the close of this time we find him desirous of again visiting his relatives in Leicestershire, from whom he had now been so long absent. The report of his coming home caused some commotion in the district, and several ministers who had known him from his youth upward, were gathered together to controvert his views.

We may read in his Journal how these ministers *argued* against him, how he replied, and what the people did; how he stood his ground, and fearlessly denounced all preaching for hire; declaimed against formality in religion, and asserted that these Independent preachers, now called priests, who had taken possession of the Church pulpits by ejecting the Episcopalian clergy, were as bad as they had been. He thought them

worse because they who had formerly declared against churches and benefices were now fattening on them; and all this he maintained against some seven or more of these preachers, with great crowds listening. If he did not satisfy all, he was, at least, let alone. His father, who seems to have had great doubts of his son's career, was so satisfied that he said (striking his cane on the ground), as he walked away from one of these scenes: "Truly, I see he that will but stand to the truth, it will carry him out." Thus, as on many other occasions, George Fox stood his ground, and it would seem to have been one of the toughest of his priestly encounters. These preachers were not, however, inclined to let him go away to the other parts in peace, and the state of the country just then was so disturbed by rumours of plots and rebellions, that it needed but a hint to Cromwell's lieutenant, who ruled the Leicestershire district, for George Fox to be summoned before him as a dangerous man who might be plotting for the return of King Charles, calling people together in crowds, and threatening the peace of the Protector's kingdom.

It was in vain that the shrewd Quaker showed how strong was the contrast between his open-air meetings and the secret assemblies of the conspirators and insurrectionists. The military official, though himself inclined to treat George Fox's case with indifference, was prompted to harsher measures by a cruel son, who plainly said George Fox was too powerful a man to be let alone; he had had power long enough, and must now be *cut off*. Colonel Hacker (for that was the name of the lieutenant) decided to let Cromwell himself be the judge, and told George Fox to be ready to go to

the Protector in London at six the next morning. There is no doubt, by the stress laid upon this scene in the Journal, that George Fox considered this sentence, for him to be taken before the Lord Protector, as equivalent to a being tried for his life. (Such terror had the great fierce man, now come to the chief power through battle and strife, inspired throughout the country), and he entreated for another interview with the Colonel. It was granted, and he was admitted to Colonel Hacker's chamber, when, failing by entreaty to shake the Lieutenant's resolution, the ardent preacher of righteousness knelt at the soldier's bedside, and poured out his heart in prayer, warning the Colonel as he departed that he would remember this refusal to grant mercy, in the day of his own calamity. And so it seems he did, for this Colonel Hacker had been the commander of the soldiers who led King Charles to execution, and guarded the scaffold as the headsman struck his blow. As such he became a marked man at the time of the Restoration, and was hung for it, like a common criminal, from the gallows at Tyburn.

In her endeavours to save her husband his wife gave up the warrant he had received, authorising the execution (it is that document having so many signatures and seals with which, through its lithographic copies, we are become familiar), but it was in vain. It failed to save his life, and it cost the lives of many more; for against each man then living whose signature was found on that paper so given up by Colonel Hacker's wife to save her husband, the Royalist vengeance was directed, and either by poison or death his death was compassed, and if dead his body was dug up, cut to pieces, and dis-

honoured. This was that Colonel Hacker who thus sent George Fox up to the greatest and severest man in the realm, and he, in the hour of his own mortal distress, told his wife, who became subsequently a Friend, how well and how sadly he remembered the scene when he turned a deaf ear to George Fox's remonstrance.

With that artless simplicity which is the offspring of truth and its greatest charm, we, in thus reading the Journal, see plainly the fears awakened in the mind of the young preacher at the prospect of having to stand in judgment before the great Oliver. We see in the sequel there was no cause for alarm, and yet he has not expunged how he had felt as if such might have been the case. If his Lieutenant could not discern any difference between a preacher of righteousness drawing crowds, and a conspirator raising the counties, Cromwell was not so wanting in spiritual discernment. He gave his strong hand to George Fox as they conversed together in his own private chamber one morning before Cromwell was dressed, saying, as they parted, "If thou and I met oftener we should know each other better;" allowed George Fox to keep his hat on without taking offence; accepted his written declaration that he was no plotter; listened to his earnest exhortations; and as he passed away from the interview George Fox found himself no longer a prisoner but invited as a guest to dine at the Protector's table. Herein Cromwell had failed to know his man; and when this refusal to sit down and refresh himself was reported to him, he exclaimed, "Now I see that there is a people risen up that I cannot win with gifts; all other people and sects I have found, I can."

This cordial recognition of George Fox by Cromwell is an honourable trait in the great warrior-legislator's character. The men that thus stood side by side were both men of mark—men of bulk of body and depth and breadth of brain; rulers among men—and yet how different! The one come to be head, before whom the nation was prostrate and the princes of the world bent to do him honour—the other was but a preacher of righteousness; the one had taken to the sword of the flesh, and the other would own only the sword of the Spirit. The hero had by his genius so wielded his weapon as to make himself called the Lord High Protector; the preacher was his prisoner, a man mocked at by the priests, reviled by the ministers, and imprisoned by the magistrates. But did he lose his cause? On which side, let us now ask, lay the strength and the power, the glory and the victory?

Far be it from us to speak against Cromwell and his historic legislative fame, but the truth for which George Fox pleaded and suffered—civil and religious liberty—has not that triumphed? And what a regenerating influence in society have been the men and the descendants of the men who caught the first notes of that which was their life, from the man who espoused a cause in a manner so little appealing to the outward eye—to the power of physical force—as to have apparently but small prospect of any success. Judge not things by appearances, but judge righteous judgment.

Such an interview as this shows the religious spirit of the Great Protector; it had supported him in his arduous campaigns, when soldier and commander alike stimulated themselves by it into enthusiasm. But

Cromwell did not become as life advanced an increasingly religious man ; and although at this time, which was just at the commencement of his assumption of supreme power, he was willing to see and own the religious spirit, and give it liberty, he did not continue in that impartial discernment ; and George Fox had at various times in the course of succeeding years, to see him on the grievous sufferings by fine and imprisonment his friends endured under the Protectorate. The truth of the matter was that, having entered upon the highest position in the realm, to which he had no other claim than the force of his character, he encountered such storms in insurrections and conspiracies, that nothing but high-handed force could keep down the people. This he accomplished by a sort of martial law, his lieutenants being invested with summary powers for the purpose. If in the violent controversies of the time those officials looked favourably or indifferently on Friends they could have their meetings and their freedom ; but if they lent a listening ear to the priest or ministers the Friends suffered for it. In this way much persecution was endured under Cromwell's Government by the early Friends ; and he left 1,000 of them, or more, in prison in different parts of the land at his death.

This first interview between the Lord High Protector and his prisoner set George Fox at liberty, and left him free from any promise or engagement on his part, except the written paper he had handed in denying, as he would do most thoroughly, any idea of plotting against the Government. He was enabled now to move freely about London, and found many very desirous of

seeing him. He had been there before—some ten years ago ; but how different his state then to what it was now ! On both occasions when he came he was a prisoner ; but a prisoner under a different power ; in the one case it was the power of the Spirit that imprisoned him, in the other the arm of flesh. When he came to London at first he was under deep trial, and could find no liberty ; sorrow was heavy upon him, and he went out, and walked alone and miserable in Barnet Chase—a silent, sad, and solitary man ! Those bonds had been broken ; he had heard the word of the Lord in his inmost soul ; the word had made him free, and he was become endued with a power over which the arm of flesh had no control. Though brought up as a prisoner, no longer able to go out alone into the wilds around the City, his spirit was free ; he could speak face to face with the great Protector himself, and receive a warm grasp of brotherly recognition from that red-handed hero. He was no longer alone, for numerous eager sympathisers were to press around him for counsel and instruction.

We do not know that there are any special incidents to note in this his second visit to the metropolis. It inaugurated a sphere of much service, extending at frequently-recurring intervals over the remaining years of his life, and there in peace and quiet, after so many a storm, he laid down his head to his last long sleep, all in the heart of London's busiest centre.

Now at this time he was to find active service, and as he went to and fro in all parts of the City, he found companies of sympathising followers. His northern ministry had borne fruit ; those valiant north men, his disciples, had been busy in London as elsewhere ;

and under the soul-arousing ministry of such Sons of Thunder as Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill, the assemblies of the sects had been visited, their attenders exhorted, objectors refuted, and adherents gained by the thousand; and all rejoiced to see George Fox himself now among them. It is a tribute to the force of his character, both natural and spiritual, to see how at once all turned instinctively to him as their head. "I notice" (writes one in a letter of the time) "that in any company when George is present all the rest are silent;" and in another, written by Edward Burrough and F. Howgill, when themselves drawing crowds by their ministry, they send their love to dear George, and exclaim, "Oh, for but one hour of his company, what a treasure it would be to us!"

Worship of man! some will say. Exaltation of the creature—of that beware! Beware? True; but in its right place man must worship man—that is the mystery! Man has brought man to death; man must bring to man life, and now and then, here and there, in all ages and generations, now, as ever, and so on for ever until time shall end, and the words "It is finished" be proclaimed, men will arise of towering proportions, spiritually and morally. Sad is it when they come in their own name, deluded are those they draw away after them. Blessed, when they truly come in the name of the Lord, and as shepherds, under the *Great Shepherd*, lead up into the one true fold of life and peace.

The Society of Friends, which George Fox was the means of inaugurating, seems, at first sight, a spiritual body, needing no support in the flesh, every man looking right on himself, requiring no church organism to stimu-

late or steady his faith; and yet, as much as any, is it dependent on man, and from the first was so. A man of unusual physical and extraordinary spiritual power was, so long as he lived, incessantly in motion among it; men of high endowments were his earnest auxiliaries, and by their self-devoted lives and unwearying energy, sustained the cause; and where should we be (the most spiritual, as some term us, among the sects) but for the men and the women of high character who have devoted themselves to the cause; all honour be to their names, and well may we study their memorials. So has it been in the Church at all ages; the man with breath only in his nostrils is but ephemeral, and wherein he is to be accounted of; but the man in whom is the spirit of the living God hath the power of an endless life.

However, we have no wish unduly to exalt G. F. He had many things to keep him low—as all have who do really take a banner and go forth in the name of the Lamb. True to his constant practice of active service, so soon as his friends were well settled in one place, he moved on to some other where there was trouble, or where there was an unbroken field, and he is soon found riding down into the far-west, and engaged in earnest labour among the towns and villages of Cornwall, then, as he terms it, a “dark and heathenish land.” These times were perilous for such undertakings; and, the West of England being in an unsettled state from threatened risings, George Fox and his companions before long had their freedom to travel stopped by military arrest. It was a repetition of what had happened before, involving an appearance before some

military official who combined judge and jury in one; and sometimes, as in this case, accuser also. Consigned by this summary process to the gaol at Launceston, he and his companion had a hard time of it, the gaoler being a cruel, wicked oppressor.

What a contrast to the prisons of our day were the prisons of that time. The gaols were then under the control of the gaolers, who farmed them of the authorities; and prisoners were accommodated, not according to their crimes, or as they *behaved*, but as they *paid*. Thus the most wicked man, if he chose to pay for it, could sleep and feed in prison as well as in his own house; but the serious Friend who, feeling he had done no wrong, refused to pay, was denied anything beyond the regulation allowance of straw and water and bread, and had just such a cell as the gaoler pleased.

This one at Launceston put George Fox into a most abominable hole, and heaped every kind of indignity upon him. But Quakerism took a firm root in Cornwall; and his sufferings and the undaunted patience with which they were borne gave a force to his prison sermons and prison letters which contributed to the spread of the cause. "The more they imprison me," he says in one place, "the more the truth spreads."

The journals of these years of George Fox's active life during the Protectorate abound in incidents. Something seems to happen in almost every town. He is ready for polemical encounter with any, whether Baptist, Jesuit, or Ranter, and seldom fails to give a good reason for the faith that is in him. Now and then he meets with disturbances, but in general his presence and manner command respect. Like John Wesley, one

hundred years later, he moved about as an acknowledged leader and head among them all. He received this honour as one ever ready to be in the eye of danger, turning aside from no suffering. If disturbances threatened anywhere, he was the man to face them ; if ill-treated in a town by an enraged populace he would ride back and face them again, and not unfrequently brought the rabble to some show of reason. If he did this in his own strength and for his own sake he was but a brave man ; but he did it, as he says, in a strength not his own, and sought, like David of old, for the aid of One who should cover his head in the day of battle.

Throughout he was a man of weighty utterance, and of deep, earnest prayer. We see proof of this in reading an account of one of the general assemblies of his friends that used at this early time to come together, not like our present *Yearly Meeting*, as an organised representative body (the Society had, strictly speaking, no organisation in its early and *missionary* stage), but gatherings now here, now there, at various places and irregular times. On one of these occasions a Friend from Ireland came to see him. It was William Edmundson, who did a work in founding the Society in the north of that country very similar to what George Fox accomplished in England.

His life and experiences, as all who have read his journals will own, are very instructive, and show he was as a captain in the cause. He desired to see George Fox, and came over to England to one of their general gatherings for that purpose ; and in turning to William Edmundson's own account we learn more fully *how* he

was received, and we quote it as illustrating George Fox's devotional character.

They were men both about the same age, but William Edmundson was only just entered on the work of the ministry; he evidently approached George Fox with subdued feelings, as one much deeper in religious experience. The reception was a loving one; and, taking him aside from the many friends there gathered, those two went into an orchard, where George Fox, when they were alone, knelt down and prayed. But One else was present also—"for" (he adds) "*the Lord's heavenly presence was there.*" Is not this a testimony to the secret of George Fox's power?—viz. earnest prevailing prayer. Here we see him in the zenith of his fame, surrounded with adherents, neither high nor lifted up, but loving and tender, retiring into the fields with his inquirer, and there bringing all before the Lord in prayer. No wonder William Edmundson was deeply moved; and Friends in the north of Ireland also, when they heard of this, and read the brief epistle George Fox wrote, "the power of the Lord seized on them, whereby they *were mightily shaken and broken into tears and weeping.*" We will quote the document; it is very short, and it will allow us to say something about George Fox's other writings. It begins:—

"FRIENDS,—In that which convinced you, wait, that you may have that removed you are convinced of; and all my dear Friends dwell in the life, and love, and power and wisdom of God; in unity with one another and with God; and the peace and wisdom of God fill your hearts, that nothing may rule in you but the life which stands in the Lord God."

Here are some six lines of print, brief indeed, and

some may say mere religious sentiment; but the message was fresh in its character; was new to those times; and is the germ of George Fox's teaching—the opening words are also a key-note. "Friends. In that which convinced you, *wait*." It was addressed to earnest, zealous Christian believers, who were for building up a Church, realising a Zion,—little thinking they were but doing it in their own strength, and that their faith stood in their own natural power.

It is hard for a man to understand this—they were mazed at its discovery. They saw they were but as the Pharisee—dwelling on an outward sacrifice; a work outside them, and knew not the work of the Spirit in their own heart. They were building up themselves in their faith and trusting in the work of their own hands; lifting their eyes to heaven as scribes well furnished in holy things, and were struck down to discover the Publican's position was their right place. "*In that which convinced you, WAIT.*" See how he strikes home;—it is not "*you* who have convinced yourselves"—that would nourish spiritual pride. You are the subject of a Power; your altered views are the result of the Spirit's influence; show then your reverence for it; show your desire for its development by *waiting*.

In that which convinced you, wait—so that of which you *are* convinced may be taken away. Here is an alliteration of which he was fond. It pushes the thrust yet further: You, seemingly religious, but now struck down, have a work you must *submit* to; a work you cannot do yourselves. You have not found it out by yourselves; it was not you who showed yourselves your own darkness; a power above you and over you hath

done this, and now go not about to mend your own state. Wait—that which hath convinced you of the need will take away all your *self*-trust and *self*-reliance, the stay that has now been broken. Wait, and let that which convinced you of what has to be removed take it away! Those who heard him knew what he meant, and as they sat under it in weeping and tears realised the Holy Spirit to work this work in their own hearts.

George Fox, in his writings, dwells largely on what he here epigrammatically propounds; it was his mission to insist on the reality of the Spirit's work in the soul of man, convincing him of *sin* when he thought he was *religious*, and taking away the *natural* heart to give the *spiritual*; for the natural heart comprehendeth not (says Paul the apostle, alluding to the same work) the things of the Spirit, they are only to be *spiritually* apprehended. These men thus addressed in the letter sent by William Edmundson had been trained up in a sort of combination of Pharisaical piety and muscular Christianity; seasonable indeed was the message, and the word might well go home with power. They did not merely listen to it, but they sought to realise it; and that which they did, others did over all parts of the country, and in doing so became known as Quakers.

Let us pursue it a little further, for we shall soon have to put George Fox again into a dungeon, and see him left there all but to die. The Convincer—who is He? The Spirit convinceth you; and who sendeth the Spirit? Who obtained its gift for man? The Lord Jesus. Who is the Life but the Saviour who gave His life? Who is the Love but He who so loved us? Who is the Power? Christ, the power of God and the

wisdom of God,—thus leading up to what he so early in life epitomised by saying, “We are nothing, Christ is all.” So this short letter to the Friends in the North of Ireland has in it the germ of his teaching—simple, yet deep; and, when truthfully carried out, occasioned all those oppositions to the ways and maxims of the world and worldly Christianity which brought the Friends into so much trouble.

George Fox’s epistles to Friends about this period are numerous. They are not attractive as compositions—they are, perchance, not suited to our day; they dwell on controverted points from which religious thought has now shifted; but we cannot read them, especially those at different periods addressed to Friends in the ministry, without being impressed with the judgment they exhibit. His first epistle of this kind, issued just as the sixty were going forth (full, as we may be sure, of missionary ardour), is loving but *cautious*. The same waiting spirit is inculcated as in the letter to the Friends of Ireland.

Later on, when, no doubt, the struggle and strife had lessened the first ardour, comes one in which “Sound! sound! abroad! is the leading exhortation; Let all the world hear you; all may do something—some may *plough*, others *sow*, some *thresh*, and others *gather*, and some, he says, only *break the clods*; he would find work FOR ALL!” Then come precautionary advices—“that each may know his work; that Friends when reached, be gathered away out of the strife of tongues, and also that none go into debates but those who are *strong* and able in argument; that the instrument be selected for the service.” Further, as years proceeded, his messages

came as those of a tender father, pleading for regulation and order. In reference to ministry he says: "Those who are led like babes to bubble forth but a few words, are to be borne with and treated tenderly; and if any Friend should say anything in the ministry unsuitable or not according to the judgment of any Friend, no notice to be taken of it at the time while the meeting lasts, but afterwards, at a private interview, to speak with the individual, and so avoid any unsettlement or controversy arising in the meeting; the meeting being not for opinion or debate, but gathered in the life and power and dread of the Lord."

But we must now pass swiftly through the interval from the times of the Protectorate of Cromwell to those under the Restoration, where we shall have to leave our Friend but just released from a prolonged and most cruel captivity. His exertions all through Oliver Cromwell's days were incessant, and when not in prison he was ever on the move, travelling from place to place, answering objections and issuing addresses, some of them in rather highly prophetic strain; for he believed himself as an apostle announcing the Kingdom of Heaven, and that the same spirit worked in him as in the prophets and disciples. People were believing then up and down the land, amid the troubles of those times, in the near approach of the end, and that the Kingdom of Heaven was about to appear.

The Fifth Monarchy men soon after came from talk to force, and began to fight for the last—the *fifth*—great Monarchy, the reign of the Lord Jesus. But George Fox would bring people to see how the kingdom must be set up in the heart, and so did good service in quiet-

ing very many, as they saw in astonishment what need they had for a change there. Thus he, though constantly persecuted as a seditious man, was really a quieter of the people.

When the Restoration came, there was, for a little time, great joy in the land, and, among the rest, the poor Friends had a respite; yet it proved to be but a streak of light in the dark cloud—which soon vanished away. For as Bishops returned to power, and Episcopalians resumed their service at Altar and pulpit, the Friend, who would neither come and hear them nor pay them maintenance, was grievously smitten. Those who suffered most were the preachers; for, under the conviction that if the shepherd were smitten the flock must disperse, a systematic persecution was set up against all unordained speakers, by which one after another of the Friends had to take his place beside the felon in the common gaol, with little prospect of deliverance except by death. Edward Burrough, Richard Hubberthorn, Francis Howgill, and many others, thus died in prison; and it fell to George Fox's lot but very narrowly to escape the same end.

Charles II. had been king some four or five years when the Church and State party had become fully at work to accomplish their end of uprooting Nonconformity, and making England one in King and in Church. The agents in this work, priests and magistrates, were very busy about it in the North of England; and George Fox, finding how hard it was going with his friends there, determined by giving himself up to see whether they would not, as having taken the chief shepherd of the heretics, let the rest alone; so, though

he heard of the warrant the justices had resolved to give for his apprehension in ample time to escape, he awaited the arrival of the officer, and appeared in his custody before the magistrates, then sitting at Houlker Hall.

There was really nothing against him except that he would *not* go to church and *would* hold meetings ; but the county squires, sitting round, taunted him with being a conspirator. "That," says Fox, "was more than I knew how to bear ;" and, stepping forward, he struck the table with his hand, and said, "I conspiring to overthrow the King!!! Why, I have suffered more for the King than any of you here, who talk so loudly of King and country. Where were you, with all your royalty, in Oliver's days ? Why, I lay six months a prisoner in a dungeon of Darby Castle because I would not fight against the King!!" He knew his men, and knew their lives, and gave them home-thrusts in other ways as well as this ; but the resolution was pre-determined, and all this was but, as it were, by-play. The newly-framed Oath of Allegiance was tendered, which, if a man would not swear it, needed no judge or jury or elaborate process to make him, practically, an outlaw, and such George Fox was in reality now made.

His imprisonment was greatly prolonged ; the malice of his enemies seemed to intensify rather than decrease, and there is little doubt they meant to compass his death. It was chequered by attendances before courts, undergoing sham trials, in which the chance of release seemed each time to lessen. The place of his confinement was at first Lancaster, but subsequently he was taken to Scarborough Castle, where, on the bleak head-

land projecting seaward, the sea encompassing it on all sides but one, he passed a winter of such severity that it very near ended his days. Strong and amazingly temperate, capable, as it seemed, of endurance under all kinds of hardships, that Scarborough winter laid him low. He was denied firing, exposed purposely to rain and wind day and night—no repair was permitted to the wretched hole where he had to lay—his strength succumbed, and, like so many of his fellow-preachers, he would have passed away but that, as it were at the last, when his strength was just gone, a special order came from the King, who had been pleaded with in much entreaty, and Jordan Croslands, the governor, told him he was free. He was taken away by his friends; pains racking every joint, his limbs greatly swollen, each finger was become as large as three. But the spirit was undaunted; never more so than at this time. The comfort and joy of his friends was great—the governor who had had him in charge said he was “pure as a bell, and stiff as a tree.” He at once used his slowly returning strength for the cause he loved so well, riding out at times, when he had to be lifted on and off his horse; sitting up all night, advising, exhorting, and consoling, though every tooth in his head ached, and anything warm was too painful to take; yet amid these outward sufferings the spirit that was in him shone brightly, and everywhere his reappearance was welcome.

Thus journeying, we find him, before long, to have reached London—the great City—now two-thirds destroyed. “I walked,” he says, “among her ashes; for the great fire had just happened; it was a time of desolation.” He and other Friends felt it was a judg-

ment for the hard persecuting spirit that had been shown. There were other desolations also to mourn—desolations in the camp of the faithful; disorders and dissensions had crept in; the policy of the rulers had had its effect: the shepherd had been smitten, and the flocks were scattering. Nearly all the first travelling preachers were now either deceased, cut off by sufferings, or in prison; the Society, at that time without any organism, was becoming disintegrated—amid such desolations. What was to be done? George Fox believed himself helped to apply a remedy; and on another occasion we may call to mind what was that remedy he introduced.

NOTE.—At the Restoration of Episcopacy under Charles the Second, Friends were specially named in Acts of Parliament passed for the suppression of all other than *its* modes of worship—whereby magistrates could disperse with armed force all such assemblies even in private houses when more than the household were present; they had power also to inflict fines on a scale of graduating intensity, culminating in transportation for life as a common felon. As many as 4,000 Friends were in prison at one time under these efforts of a high Church and State party to secure uniformity in the *mode* of worship, and many found refuge by emigration to America.

LECTURE VI.

OUR last notice of George Fox brought us to the time when—but just released through special intercessions with the king from a prolonged incarceration in the gaol of Scarborough—he was come to London, broken in health and strength, to find fresh demands on whatever energy might be left in him. Upon the Great City was fallen a calamity unknown to it since the days of Boadicea, and two-thirds of its houses were in ashes—whilst pestilence had ravaged its population a year before. But to George Fox these outward desolations of the citizens were less direct in their appeals on his personal assistance than the desolation wrought by persecution in the various communities of his friends.

Possessing little or no organisation, and deprived by death or imprisonment of the valiant travelling preachers, grievous disintegrating tendencies had set in. Episcopalians, now returned to power, had pursued their policy of smiting the shepherd in order to scatter the flock, until hardly one of the early missionary preachers remained alive or at large. Disorders prevailed among Friends—marriages were being irregularly solemnized—social proprieties disregarded, and there was much of each minding what was right in his own eyes, and saying that it was but following the light within. The struggle with such a depressing state of affairs developed a phase of George Fox's character which entitles him to

the position of a wise governor in the Friends' Society, and introducer of the means of its preservation to the present day.

As Luther descended from his mountain retreat, refreshed in spirit, to seize the reins at a critical moment, and give to the German Protestant his Bible, so George Fox had not suffered that long imprisonment in vain, but issued from Scarborough an altered man—the times were changed, and he was ready to meet them, Misguided enthusiasm was checked, and to zeal he superadded order.

One case, in London, may be given as an illustration in John Perrot, an Irishman, who during the times of stripping from death or imprisonment of such men as Burrough and Dewsbury, acquired much influence by a high swelling spirit, though it had but a small tenement for its habitation. Self-confident and enterprising to an extreme, he interviewed the Doge of Venice, addressed himself to the Jews, wrote to India, and journeyed even to Rome, hoping to end the Papal heresy by his eloquence; and though it only introduced him to the dungeons of the Vatican, and the disciplinary powers of the Inquisition, he was as vigorous as ever on his return in propagating whatever views he might entertain. In the title of one of his various works he appears as a "Wren in a burning bush;" in another, as a "Battering-ram against Rome; or, the battle of John the follower of the Lamb;" and in an address to India speaks of "beams of eternal brightness—branches of everlasting blessings," which the context would imply are to flow from the knowledge of truths unfolded by "John, who is called a Quaker." In outward deportment he was

singular by wearing a beard (which would not now have earned him that distinction); but the trouble he caused was through inducing his friends to remain covered in time of prayer, describing the removal of the hat on such occasions as only a vain ceremony. This had so taken with them as to have become quite a practice with London Friends at the time of George Fox's reappearance; and even one so superior as Thomas Elwood had been deluded by John Perrot's plausibility and speciousness to wearing his hat in time of prayer. No such sophistries availed with George Fox, who, penetrating the real motives of this so-called lofty spirituality, unmasked the pride that lurked beneath, and bringing back all into allegiance to the ancient and reverent practice, John Perrot seems to have betaken himself to other spheres than England for his vagaries and religious conceits.

This is given as one out of many examples, in but one place, of disorders the communities exhibited at this critical juncture. Such prevailed all over the country; Friends being without any authority to restrain them, having no discipline, and their General Meetings or Quarterly Meetings having no relation one to another, and not interfering with such questions.

It was now that George Fox, by the establishing of Monthly Meetings, introduced an element into our social organisation as important to the Friends as class-meetings to the Wesleyans. In them church power originates—and they owed their origin to his exertions and personal influence. It was the work of his middle life, the incessant labour of years, undertaken amid great physical weakness and hardship, involving long and

arduous journeys all over the kingdom, and accomplished amid much opposition from Friends themselves.

By these Monthly Meetings the care of the Society became committed to the members of the Society themselves, for which purpose the particular group of Friends in each town or district were invited to come together once a month, not for purposes of worship only, but for considering their own state as a Society. Books of record were to be kept; marriages regularly authorised and solemnised; births and burials registered; burial-grounds provided; the needs of the poor inquired into and met; disorderly walkers dealt with; differences between Friend and Friend adjusted, and "all to see that all who profess the truth, do walk in righteousness and holiness, and order their conversation aright as becometh the household of God."

It is not easy for any present members of the Society, accustomed to Monthly Meetings with all their arrangements, to imagine why at first any difficulty should have been experienced in their original establishment. Yet a remembrance how much stress was laid upon each true Friend being himself under the conscious personal guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ as a light to his own dwelling—will explain how opposition might arise to the development of any external control, as an infringement upon the liberty wherewith "Christ hath made us free." To such, the Monthly Meetings seemed as an entanglement in a yoke of bondage, unnecessary for those who had the light of Christ in their heart, and distasteful to men of strong personal character, marked individuality, and strength of will.

But George Fox was enabled, on the same basis as he

had ever inculcated, to show how the spirit of the prophets must be subject to the prophets; that it was not good for man to be alone; that as each drew nigh and felt the power of God in himself, so would the same power be known in accelerated force if all those so-influenced came together and thus, under the power, looked out upon and sought for the right way of meeting the difficulties and evil with which they had become surrounded—difficulties and evils which were also, alas, in the camp of the Society itself.

To him the Monthly Meeting was but an expansion of the principle of individual responsibility he had ever inculcated; a wider area for the exercise of true liberty and true power, and he spared himself no exertion in maintaining these views, nor shrank from the labour, in hard travel, involved in making them known to his brethren. They everywhere yielded to his solicitations, and before his journeyings on this account had ceased periodical gatherings of men Friends, for the purpose of discipline, were become universal throughout the country, with marked results in the increase of settlement and good order. It had been a personal work. No General Assembly or Convocation had been called before it was decided on. He went forth with no documentary sanction. Yearly Meetings were unknown. It was the travail of his own soul, caused by the disorders he saw around him, and he felt it as a mission from Him who had at first sent him forth. No other service of his was attended with greater result in the present or the future. Through it the Society, consolidated amid its threatened disintegrations, has withstood the shock and strain of two succeeding centuries, and

Friends have been brought to have a systematic care over one another, that all might live worthily to what they professed.

Without possessing, at the first, any connecting link between one another, the Monthly Meetings under these arrangements commenced their career with as much perfectness in their individual capacity as the separate Churches among the Independents ; and, notwithstanding the network a *representative* system in its development has woven around them, the original power of these units has never disappeared. They still remain the origin of legislative and executive power amid the overshadowing influence of the Annual General Assembly that has grown up since. They admit to and dissolve from membership ; they acknowledge ministers and appoint elders ; they nominate representatives to the superior meetings, and whatever is resolved on *there* comes back to *them* for execution.

At first they were composed of *men* Friends only (the introduction of Women's Monthly Meetings being some years later, and involving another set of journeyings from George Fox to establish them), nor were all men Friends at first expected to attend them, but only those who received an intimation that their company would be acceptable—a precaution, doubtless, very necessary amid the miscellaneous assemblage gathered together in the net of the early and enthusiastic preachers.

Thus all the more earnest-minded Friends in each district became associated together, as George Fox says, “to have a care for God's honour and glory, as shown in the right living of those who professed His

name"; and, in the settlement and order which ensued, full became the acknowledgment in "praise and blessing that the Lord God had ever sent him forth on such a service among them." Let the following, from William Penn's testimony to George Fox, show in what spirit this service was performed by him:—"In all these occasions, though there was no person the discontented struck so sharply at as this good man, he bore all their prejudice, and forgave them their bitter speeches; . . . and truly I must say that, though God had visibly clothed him with a divine preference and authority—and indeed his very presence expressed a religious majesty—yet he never abused, but held his place in the Church of God with great meekness, and a most engaging humility and moderation; for upon all occasions, like his blessed Master, he was a servant to all."

There occurred, about this time, to George Fox, a settlement of a character more personal to himself than that of the discipline, in his becoming united in marriage to Margaret Fell, who, in thus changing her surname a second time, at the ripe age of fifty-five, terminated a period of some eleven years of widowhood, and became wife to one whose preaching had, in her early days, altered the whole course of her spiritual life.

George Fox's conduct in this matter is marked by his usual caution, judgment, and disinterestedness. The proposal, though made and accepted some time before, had remained in abeyance for a sense to arise of the right time for further proceedings; and now that such seemed to open, all the daughters of the former marriage, with their husbands, were summoned to be

assured of their consent, and to be informed, by documentary papers, of his resolution not to avail himself in any way of his intended wife's estate. Such proceeding became, in after years, the subject of comment in a court of law, before a judge who could not believe a man would take any such self-denying course, until the papers were produced confirming the statement; at which, George Fox says, "they wondered."

Thus, all being clear, Friends were duly informed, and the marriage solemnised at Bristol Meeting. He was now, at the age of forty-five, become possessed of a comfortable home, a wife devotedly attached to him, a large circle of daughters-in-law and their husbands, settled in comfortable establishments of their own, to which he was ever welcome; and thirty years of incessant labour might well prompt him to a share in this outward repose. But with Margaret Fox, as with her husband, the service of their Lord and Master, and the good of His cause, were dearer than personal comforts; and in their marriage—undertaken, as they believed, for the benefit of the Society—neither would wish to be to the other any hindrance, but rather a furtherance in the work. Hence, ten days after the wedding, they departed each to their several lines of service, and but little out of their twenty years of married life was spent in the enjoyment of one another's society. It left her his survivor during twelve more years of widowhood; and in looking back, on his decease, at their frequent separations, she says: "It was upon God's account, and His truth's service; and to deny ourselves of that comfort which we might have had in being together, for the sake and service of the

Lord and His truth ; and if any took occasion or judged hard of us because of that, the Lord will judge them ; for we are innocent."

In this period of his life we meet with a circumstance showing a value for education which might not have been expected after the strong denunciations of his earlier days against colleges and human learning ; but we should place a wrong estimate on those strictures if we thought them any other than oppositions to making a science of religion ; for he had ever sought to improve his own lack of education, and was now solicitous—by the establishment of two boarding-schools, one for boys and another for girls—to let the young people be taught the knowledge of "all things civil and useful in the creation." So he was founder of the educational movements in our Society, and that at a time when to Non-conformists such pursuits involved them in severe penalties—as much as £40 for each offence ; for the Episcopalian party now in power, finding how many ejected ministers were sheltering themselves under guise of keeping schools, made all such occupations penal, unless their masters came to church bringing their pupils with them.

After some years spent in strenuous endeavour on the part of the bishops to secure by law the use of the church as the only place of worship for Englishmen, met by determined yet passive resistance on the part of Friends, and occasioning incessant anxieties to George Fox to encourage them under these trials, there occurred a temporary lull in the ecclesiastical storm, of which he took advantage as enabling him to visit the many Friends who had now gone to America.

The voyage was made in a small ship, the leaky condition of which placed her passengers in much danger of their lives, and from an Algerian pirate that pursued them they had a narrow escape of capture for slaves; but in those hours of danger George Fox's calmness and prophetic spirit made him to the captain and crew of that little ship on the Atlantic what Paul the Apostle was to the great ship of Alexandria on the Mediterranean, and they felt their lives had been given them for a prey. This visit was subsequently extended to the West Indies; it occupied three years of his life, and involved an amount of rough travelling that proved very fatiguing to one so large and heavy as he had now become.

Coming back to England after this three years' absence, filial affection prompted the attempt to see once more his now aged mother, and he journeyed towards the midland counties with this object, holding meetings as he went; but an arrest and long imprisonment prevented the accomplishment of this desire, and his mother, on finding him thus stopped, so took it to heart as to cause her death. It seemed as if he also would find in a similar way his own release, for a grievous sickness attended this imprisonment, and he was only rescued (as in the case of the Scarborough one) by direct interference of the King, at whose mandate, by writ of Habeas Corpus, his cause was moved for trial in the King's Bench, after he had been imprisoned at Worcester for fourteen months. Chief Justice Hale (one of the best of our English judges) heard the case — pronounced the indictment under which he was being thus confined to death erroneous,

and therefore invalid—refused all solicitations of adversaries to re-imprison him as a dangerous man, saying, “I have heard some such reports, but I have heard many more good reports of him;” and so he gave him his liberty, which never afterwards was interfered with.

His kind wife and her family now induced him to go up with them in their coach to the North (he was not able, he says, to ride horseback), and at Swarthmore there ensued for him a period of two years of quiet under their care, during which his active mind found occupation in the gathering together and arranging papers connected with his life and mission, forming the material from which his journals were published after his decease.

The cause of truth ere long closed this interval of rest, and while still finding travel hard through weakness of body, there was a journeying towards London amid constant labour by the way; the days were spent in riding, and the nights brought no rest. “For I often,” he says, “sate up late with Friends where I lodged, to inform and advise them in things, wherein they were wanting, and when I was in bed I was often hindered of sleep, by great pains which I felt in my head and teeth; . . . but the Lord’s power was over all, and carried me through all to His praise.”

There were thirteen years more of busy life before him, and, notwithstanding all these aches, pains, and bodily infirmities, he is found uniting with William Penn and other Friends in a missionary tour to Holland and Germany—visiting on religious service places now frequented by the pleasure-seeking tourist;

and experiencing—where rail and steam now offer every facility for expedition and comfort—hardships from which a man strong in health would shrink ; jolted and shaken in the roughest of conveyances, and waiting for hours, in hunger, cold, and wet, at the unopened gates of fortified cities.

Possibly it was in remembrance of such scenes that William Penn in his testimony remarks :—"I have been with him for weeks and months together on divers occasions, and those of the nearest and most exercising nature, and that by night and by day, by sea and by land, in this and foreign countries, and I can say I never saw him out of his place, or not a match for every service and occasion."

His return to England brings with it renewed service for the Society, as oppositions had arisen in the settlement of the discipline ; unruly spirits that yielded only to his personal influence, and Friends, especially in London, needed his encouragement under most determined efforts on the part of the authorities to suppress their meetings. He kept circulating among them for years, finding himself, curiously enough, in the changed state of the times protected from arrest by the very circumstances that had often led to it when the Sectaries under Cromwell were in power. Then, in the breaking-up of meetings, those who were strangers or travellers were liable to imprisonment as vagabonds, but now Episcopalian management shifted the penalties to householders present, and *travellers* escaped ; the arm of the law fell, with its penalties of fine and imprisonment, on residents, who were haled to prison, fined, treated as felons, and even sentenced to transportation

as such, but the casual attendant, though a preacher, was let alone.

Yet once again, after all this, is George Fox to be found on the Continent, being in Holland in 1684, very weak in body, but strong in spirit, and unwearied in service.

But the curtain now begins to fall, and the heavy folds of increasing infirmity droop lower and lower during the six more years that remained for him below—but ere its final drop he was permitted to see the rod of the oppressor broken, and calm endurance under suffering exchanged for the quiet of toleration and protection.

The last of the Stuart kings was fled, and with him Oppression had hidden her face; the dawn of constitutional monarchy had appeared under William of Orange, dispersing with its rays of good government the darkness of bigotry and intolerance that so long had brooded over the land; and ere this valiant warrior in the cause of civil and religious liberty sank to his rest, he lingered as in the land of Beulah contemplating the change, and warning those whom persecution had failed to overcome not to yield to the blandishments of prosperity and ease.

He fell in harness, at the age of sixty-seven, and died on the Meeting-house premises from a chill taken one cold winter morning after preaching and praying with accustomed fervency and power at Gracechurch Street. There were a few days of quiet lying on the bed in a friend's chamber, in no great pain, but ever-increasing weakness—the spirit calm to the last; and with the words "All—all—is well!" he ceased to breathe. They noticed

he closed his own eyes as he departed; and letters make mention how the features needed no attention after death—"but he lay as if he had been fallen asleep—one would have thought he had smiled—he was the most pleasant corpse that I ever looked upon; and many hundreds of Friends came to see his face, having the most part of three days' time to behold him before the coffin was nailed up. Friends carried the coffin on their shoulders without any bier, cloth, or cover, but the natural wood—yet the coffin was very smooth and comely."

Thousands of Friends in long procession, three abreast, followed through the City to Bunhill Fields; and there, amid this crowded assembly of "tender hearts, watery eyes, and contrite spirits," he was laid to rest, "living, open powerful testimonies" being born to his worth at the grave-side.

To us his memory is ever precious: a great witness to the overcoming power of true faith—a singular combination of boldness and humility, self-denial and authority, always in the eye of danger, and standing where the weight of oppression was heaviest—his zeal was tempered with discretion, and he consolidated and systematised what missionary fervour had commenced. He was head and front in the cause till his life closed, but he left it free from his own name. "I desired," he said, "to bring you not to myself but to His glory that sent me; . . . and when I turned you to Him that is able to save you, I left you to Him." So did he labour to fulfil his mission, illustrating in life and conversation his early Declaration,—*"We are nothing, Christ is all."*

APPENDIX.

GEORGE FOX'S DEATH AND BURIAL:


EXTRACTED FROM A LECTURE GIVEN IN 1861, ON
"WHITE HART COURT AND ITS RECOLLECTIONS."

GEORGE FOX spent the last years of his life almost entirely in the neighbourhood of London, as finding it to be, what it has continued ever since, the best headquarters for watching and assisting in the organisation work of the Society. He denied himself the companionship of a most affectionate wife (his "dear heart," as he used to call her), he declined the comforts of a quiet home in her mansion at Swarthmore, and was ever exhausting his once-powerful, but now enfeebled frame, in attendance on committees, in petitioning legislatures, in writing epistles and books, in answering opponents, and preaching at meetings in London. In doing this he was very frequently at White Hart Court Meeting-house—and it was in one of his visits to this place that he met with his death. His sons-in-law were all living in nice houses in the neighbourhood of London, at Kingston, at Southgate, and Waltham; but it was useless for them to try and keep him to their homes for any length of time together. He would stay with them for a season, but only to recruit his health, or to

obtain leisure for writing some works, and was ever coming up to the battle to see for himself how the strife went on. The martyr-spirit inherited from his mother, who was herself of a martyr stock, kept him ready to follow in their footsteps; and if he did not grasp the palm, amid bodily pangs such as theirs, he nevertheless fought the same good fight and kept the same faith firm unto the end.

Here in this place was it that his long warfare ended, and Death, who had so often dogged his steps, by threatening him on beds of sickness and in perils of all kinds, in noisome dungeons, hard travel, and prolonged imprisonments, now dealt his final blow in this passage of this White Hart Court Meeting-house. It was as he came out from it one raw January day, warm from the crowded assembly, and heated by the delivery of a very impressive discourse, concluded in most earnest prayer, that he felt a cold "strike to his heart" and asked to lie down.

It was the hand of Death, and that which had often touched him before and made his flesh creep and body tremble, was now permitted to rest irremoveably on his breast. This was on First-day morning, the 11th of Eleventh Month, 1890, old style; or 11th of First Month, 1691, according to the present reckoning. He retired on leaving the meeting into Henry Gouldney's house, which was one of the houses in the court leading out to Gracechurch Street, and asked to lie down, which (not having been an uncommon thing with him of latter years between the meetings) his friends hoped would remove the chill; but no warmth returned. Shivering fits supervened, and it became evident the



ebb of life's tide had set in. He complained of nothing but cold: sent for his friends to come and see him; gave them many precious and weighty parting words; grew gradually weaker throughout all Second-day, and on Third-day evening died sweetly and quietly in the greatest peace. He said his work was done, declined all medicine, kept the doctors from disturbing his peace with their draughts and applications, feeling assured his hour of departure had come. "I am clear," he said, "fully clear;" and so unto this astonishingly active life, preserved amid so many toils, such perils of all kinds by land and sea, he was permitted, when on the verge of seventy years, in peace and quietness to make, what a Friend who stood by reported as, "*an heavenly and harmonious conclusion.*" He died at half-past nine on Third-day evening, at the age of sixty-six years, in Henry Gouldney's house, adjoining the meeting-house premises.

It was noted as an incident in this solemn scene that George Fox himself closed his own eyes; also that the chin never fell nor needed any binding up, but that he lay as if he had fallen asleep, and was as the Friend before quoted further remarked, "*the most pleasant corpse he had ever seen.*" This was on Third-day night, and on the following or Fourth-day morning, after the usual week-day meeting, some of the leading Friends retired into a committee room on these premises to consider what arrangements should be made for the funeral. We are informed by a letter written by one who was present (and published in R. Barclay's "Letters of Early Friends"), that it was long before grief allowed of any other expression than deep sighs, groans, and tears; at

length they grew more composed, and a few short utterances flowed in testimony, and chiefly to the greatness of their loss. One Friend said: "A valiant is fallen this day, and a place is vacant if some faithful ones do not supply that glorious station he was in." And another, "That he had faith that the spirit which had so largely dwelt in *that* body [doubtless pointing to it] would extend itself into thousands." A third Friend recounted his services in the cause of truth; and a fourth exclaimed: "He was a fixed star in the firmament of God's glory, and that there he should shine for ever." After various utterances such as these the needful arrangements were entered upon, and concluded for the funeral, which was to take place on the Sixth-day next. It was at the time considered that Friends in London deserved great credit for the manner in which this enormous, almost public, funeral was conducted. And had the interment taken place on these premises in the vaults underneath this floor, according to what used to be the too frequent and most unwholesome and objectionable practice in the churches and chapels of other communities, we must in justice to our subject have narrated all the details that yet remain to us of that solemn day. But as the interment took place in our burial-ground of Bunhill Fields we need not enlarge upon it. Suffice it then to say that the body lay here for three days, during which any Friends who desired to do so were at liberty to come and look at that remarkable countenance now sealed in death, and many hundreds availed themselves of the opportunity, esteeming it a great privilege, and acknowledging that it was a comfort to them to witness the *serene and heavenly expression* that had settled on

the features. When Sixth-day afternoon came not only the meeting-house, but the court, and not only the court but both passages leading to it, held a dense crowd of Friends who extended also out into Lombard Street and Gracechurch Street, all waiting to take part in the procession that was to accompany the remains from the meeting-house to the grave. It is on record that no less than 4,000 Friends were assembled on this occasion, and that they walked in ranks of three abreast; keeping on one side of the street so as to allow of the citizens and carriages being on the other side, and thus making as little obstruction as they could to the regular traffic of the streets. Some arrangements of this kind must have been most needful, for if we allow only two feet space for each rank of three abreast the 4,000 Friends would extend 2,666 feet in length, or *900 yards*. Even when thus marshalled the long ranks must have reached from the meeting-house all along Lombard Street and nearly all through Coleman Street; and the cortege must have been of such a length that the bearers with the coffin would have arrived half-way between the meeting-house and the ground before the last of the three-abreast Friends had quitted the White Hart Court premises. The coffin in which the remains were placed was, we are told—without cloth—of wood, but smooth and comely. The Friends set apart to carry this carefully finished coffin were thirty-six in number, six being matched and chosen from each of the six Monthly Meetings in London. So Gracechurch Street Friends carried it one-sixth of the way; those of Bull and Mouth another; Devonshire House, Peel, Westminster, and Southwark taking each a sixth share of the distance in their turn.

What order of precedence the Monthly Meetings took is not mentioned, but it is mentioned as a tribute of respect to the greatly beloved deceased, that a select number of *elders* and *ancients* were appointed, first to lift the coffin, possibly carrying it to the doors of the meeting, there to resign their charge to the support of younger men. Be this as it may such must have been almost the most affecting part of this touching spectacle to see a little group of those who had stood side by side with the deceased, shared with him the perils of the strife—whose cheeks had become furrowed, and their heads silvered in the very same cares which had laid him low—now lifting him and bearing him on their shoulders to the door, commencing that last journey from which there is no return. Very impressive must it have been to see the coffin, not merely surrounded, but up-born by the heads of the Society. Perchance such men as William Penn, George Whitehead, or Stephen Crisp shared that burden. What need of any sable trappings of woe to give solemnity to the scene? Weighty grief, we are told, was in every face. What need of any choral service as the ancients bore their brother through the parting throng to the meeting-house door? Sighs and groans and lamentations everywhere broke forth. True grief requires no stimulants, and 4,000 *real* mourners are enough without any trapping to make of such a scene a *public* funeral. Some twelve Friends had spoken in ministry at the meeting held previous to the removal of the corpse, whose names are given in a letter remaining of that date. Their testimonies must have succeeded one another rapidly, as the meeting was over in two hours,

and most, if not all, of the communications must have been marked by brevity. Five more spoke at the interment. It was a winter's afternoon, and darkness must have set in before all was finished, and the 4,000 mourners, as they wound their way back through gloomy streets, must have felt that one who had been as a great light among them was now numbered with the silent dead.

NOTE, 1877.—In the graveyard itself, where so many eminent in their day and generation lie all undistinguished by mound, or stone, or memorial of any kind, there was an exception made in George Fox's case by a small stone being let into a former boundary wall with the initials G. F. and date carved on it; such served for generations to mark the spot of his interment until almost within the memory of those living, when a stern Friend of iconoclastic tendencies, in order, as he said, to check a growing veneration for relics, pronounced (as Hezekiah of old over the brazen serpent) "Nehustan," and had it knocked to pieces. Fortunately for those who *do* value a knowledge in such matters the discovery of an old map drawn on vellum, preserved in the archives of Devonshire House, has enabled the spot to be ascertained with tolerable precision, and now, in 1877, we may possibly have some suitable memorial erected over the place of the interment of one so well known both to the Society and the world.

As the spot is now nearly re-ascertained, curiosity might tempt an examination of the grave to see whether two centuries have left any trace of the once strong and comely frame; but its having crumbled to dust is a

well-known tradition, as mentioned in a letter published in Maria Webb's book on "The Fells of Swarthmore." A London Friend, when a lad, about a century after the interment, was at work with others on the removal of a wall for the enlargement of the ground; their labours laid bare the coffin identified by initials as that of George Fox, and he, with youthful curiosity, took the opportunity of the rest having gone to a meal to force open the lid, when, surprised by an apparently perfect corpse of a fine countenance and long white hair, he ran to find his father who was at work in another part of the ground. Unfortunately the ladder slipped as they descended and so shook the coffin that all within vanished as in instant to indistinguishable dust and bones. So says the story, and I heard it myself from an independent source to that of Maria Webb's, and long before the publication of her book. It was told me by the late Samuel Sturge (a man of great accuracy, and not given to imagination), and he said he had it *direct* from the Friend who, when a bricklayer's apprentice, had thus opened the once "smooth and comely" coffin with such a subsequent result.

W. B.

WILLIAM PENN'S ACCOUNT

OF

GEORGE FOX.

EXTRACTED FROM THE PREFACE TO G. F.'S JOURNAL.



GEORGE FOX was born in Leicestershire, about the year 1624. He descended of honest and sufficient parents, who endeavoured to bring him up, as they did the rest of their children, in the way and worship of the nation; especially his mother, who was a woman accomplished above most of her degree in the place where she lived. But from a child he appeared of another frame of mind than the rest of his brethren; being more religious, inward, still, solid, and observing, beyond his years, as the answers he would give, and the questions he would put upon occasion, manifested to the astonishment of those that heard him, especially in divine things.

His mother taking notice of his singular temper, and the gravity, wisdom, and piety that very early shined through him, refusing childish and vain sports and company when very young, she was tender and indulgent over him, so that from her he met with little difficulty. As to his employment, he was brought up

in country business; and as he took most delight in sheep, so he was very skilful in them; an employment that very well suited his mind in several respects, both from its innocency and solitude; and was a just figure of his after-ministry and service.

I shall not [says William Penn] break in upon his own account, which is by much the best that can be given, and therefore desire, what I can, to avoid saying anything of what is said already, as to the particular passages of his coming forth; but, in general, when he was somewhat above twenty, he left his friends, and visited the most retired and religious people in those parts; and some there were, short of few, if any, in this nation, who waited for the consolation of Israel night and day; as Zacharias, Anna, and good old Simeon did of old time. To these he was sent, and these he sought out in the neighbouring counties, and among them he sojourned till his more ample ministry came upon him. At this time he taught and was an example of silence, endeavouring to bring them from self-performances, testifying and turning to the Light of Christ within them, and encouraging them to wait in patience to feel the power of it to stir in their hearts, that their knowledge and worship of God might stand in the power of an endless life, which was to be found in the Light, as it was obeyed in the manifestation of it in man. "For in the Word was Life, and that Life is the Light of men," Life in the Word, Light in men—and Life in men too, as the Light is obeyed; the children of the Light living in the Life of the Word, by which the Word begets them again to God, which is the regeneration and new birth, without which there is no coming unto the

kingdom of God; and which, whoever comes to, is greater than John, that is, than John's dispensation, which was not that of the kingdom, but the consummation of the legal, and forerunning of the gospel dispensation. Accordingly, several meetings were gathered in those parts; and thus his time was employed for some years.

In 1652 (he being in his usual retirement to the Lord upon a very high mountain, in some of the higher parts of Yorkshire, as I take it, his mind exercised towards the Lord) he had a vision of the great work of God in the earth, and of the way that he was to go forth to begin it. He saw people as thick as motes in the sun, that should in time be brought home to the Lord; that there might be but one shepherd and one sheepfold in all the earth. There his eye was directed northward, beholding a great people that should receive him and his message in those parts. Upon this mountain he was moved of the Lord to sound forth his great and notable day, as if he had been in a great auditory, and from thence went north, as the Lord had shown him; and in every place where he came, if not before he came to it, he had his particular exercise and service shown to him, so that the Lord was his leader indeed; for it was not in vain that he travelled, God in most places sealing his commission with the convincement of some of all sorts, as well publicans as sober professors of religion. Some of the first and most eminent of them which are at rest were Richard Farnsworth, James Naylor, William Dewsbury, Francis Howgill, Edward Burrough, John Camm, John Auldland, Richard Hubberthorn, T. Taylor, John Aldam, T.

Holmes, Alexander Parker, William Simpson, William Caton, John Stubbs, Robert Widders, John Burnyeat, Robert Lodge, Thomas Salthouse, and many more worthies, that cannot be well here named, together with divers yet living of the first and great convincement, who, after the knowledge of God's purging judgments in themselves, and some time of waiting in silence upon Him, to feel and receive power from on high to speak in His name (which none else rightly can, though they may use the same words), felt the divine motions, and were frequently drawn forth, especially to visit the public assemblies, to reprove, inform, and exhort them; sometimes in markets, fairs, streets, and by the highway-side, calling people to repentance, and to turn to the Lord with their hearts as well as their mouths; directing them to the Light of Christ within them, to see, examine, and consider their ways by, and to eschew the evil, and do the good and acceptable will of God. They suffered great hardships for this their love and goodwill, being often put in the stocks, stoned, beaten, whipped, and imprisoned, through honest men and of good report where they lived, that had left wives and children, and houses and lands, to visit them with a living call to repentance. And though the priests generally set themselves to oppose them, and write against them, and insinuated most false and scandalous stories to defame them, stirring up the magistrates to suppress them, especially in those northern parts; yet God was pleased so to fill them with His living power, and give them such an open door of utterance in His service, that there was a mighty convincement over those parts.

And through the tender and singular indulgence of

Judge Bradshaw and Judge Fell, who were wont to go that circuit in the infancy of things, the priests were never able to gain the point they laboured for, which was to have proceeded to blood, and, if possible, Herod-like, by a cruel exercise of the civil power, to have cut them off and rooted them out of the country. Especially Judge Fell, who was not only a check to their rage in the course of legal proceedings, but otherwise upon occasion, and finally countenanced this people; for his wife receiving the truth with the first, it had that influence upon his spirit, being a just and wise man, and seeing in his own wife and family a full confutation of all the popular clamours against the way of truth, that he covered them what he could, and freely opened his doors, and gave up his house to his wife and her friends, not valuing the reproach of ignorant or evil-minded people, which I here mention to his and her honour, and which will be, I believe, an honour and a blessing to such of their name and family as shall be found in that tenderness, humility, love, and zeal for the truth and people of the Lord.

That house was for some years at first, till the truth had opened its way in the southern parts of this island, an eminent receptacle of this people. Others of good note and substance in those northern counties, had also opened their houses, with their hearts, to the many publishers that in a short time the Lord had raised to declare His salvation to the people, and where meetings of the Lord's messengers were frequently held, to communicate their services and exercises, and comfort and edify one another in their blessed ministry.

But lest this may be thought a digression, having

touched upon this before, I return to this excellent man; and for his personal qualities, both natural, moral, and divine, as they appeared in his converse with his brethren, and in the church of God, take as follows:—

I. He was a man that God endued with a clear and wonderful depth, a discerner of others' spirits, and very much a master of his own. And though the side of his understanding which lay next to the world, and especially the expression of it, might sound uncouth and unfashionable to nice ears, his matter was nevertheless very profound; and would not only bear to be often considered, but the more it was so the more weighty and instructing it appeared. And as abruptly and brokenly as sometimes his sentences would fall from him about divine things, it is well known they were often as texts to many fairer declarations. And indeed it showed, beyond all contradiction, that God sent him; that no arts or parts had any share in the matter or manner of his ministry; and that so many great, excellent, and necessary truths as he came forth to preach to mankind, had therefore nothing of man's wit or wisdom to recommend them; so that as to man he was an original, being no man's copy. And his ministry and writings show they are from one that was not taught of man, nor had learned what he said by study. Nor were they notional or speculative, but sensible and practical truths, tending to conversion and regeneration, and the setting up of the kingdom of God in the hearts of men. . . .

II. In his testimony or ministry, he much laboured to open truth to the people's understandings, and to bottom them upon the principle and principal, Christ Jesus, the

Light of the world, that by bringing them to something that was of God in themselves, they might the better know and judge of Him and themselves.

III. He had an extraordinary gift in opening the Scriptures. He would go to the marrow of things, and show the mind, harmony, and fulfilling of them with much plainness, and to great comfort and edification.

IV. The mystery of the first and second Adam, of the fall and restoration, of the law and gospel, of shadows and substance, of the servant's and Son's state, and the fulfilling of the Scriptures in Christ, and by Christ, the true Light, in all that are His through the obedience of faith, were much of the substance and drift of his testimonies. In all which he was witnessed to be of God, being sensibly felt to speak that which he had received of Christ, and which was his own experience, in that which never errs nor fails.

V. But above all he excelled in prayer. The inwardness and weight of his spirit, the reverence and solemnity of his address and behaviour, and the fewness and fulness of his words, have often struck, even strangers, with admiration, as they used to reach others with consolation. The most awful, living, reverent frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say, was his in prayer. And truly it was a testimony he knew and lived nearer to the Lord than other men; for they that know Him most, will see most reason to approach Him with reverence and fear.

VI. He was of an innocent life, no busy-body, nor self-seeker, neither touchy, nor critical; what fell from him was very inoffensive, if not very edifying. So meek, contented, modest, easy, steady, tender, it was a

pleasure to be in his company. He exercised no authority but over evil, and that everywhere and in all; but with love, compassion, and long-suffering. A most merciful man, as ready to forgive as unapt to take or give an offence. Thousands can truly say, he was of an excellent spirit and savour among them, and because thereof, the most excellent spirits loved him with an unfeigned and unfading love.

VII. He was an incessant labourer; for in his younger time, before his many great and deep sufferings and travels had enfeebled his body for itinerant services, he laboured much in the word, and doctrine, and discipline in England, Scotland, and Ireland, turning many to God, and confirming those that were convinced of the truth, and settling good order as to church affairs among them. And towards the conclusion of his travelling services, between the years seventy-one and seventy-seven, he visited the churches of Christ in the plantations in America, and in the United Provinces, and Germany, as his Journal relates, to the convince-ment and consolation of many. After that time he chiefly resided in and about the city of London; and besides the services of his ministry, which were frequent and serviceable, he wrote much, both to them that are within, and those that are without, the communion. But the care he took of the affairs of the church in general was very great.

VIII. He was often where the records of the affairs of the church are kept, and the letters from the many meetings of God's people over all the world, where settled, come upon occasions; which letters he had read to him, and communicated them to the meeting that is

weekly* held there for such services ; and he would be sure to stir them up to discharge them, especially in suffering cases, showing great sympathy and compassion upon all such occasions, carefully looking into the respective cases, and endeavouring speedy relief, according to the nature of them. So that the churches, or any of the suffering members thereof were sure not to be forgotten or delayed in their desires, if he were there.

IX. As he was unwearied, so he was undaunted in his services for God and His people ; he was no more to be moved to fear than to wrath. His behaviour at Derby, Lichfield, Appleby, before Oliver Cromwell, at Launceston, Scarborough, Worcester, and Westminster-Hall, with many other places and exercises, did abundantly evidence it to his enemies as well as his friends.

But as in the primitive times, some rose up against the blessed apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, even from among those that they had turned to the hope of the gospel, who became their greatest trouble ; so this man of God had his share of suffering from some that were convinced by him, who through prejudice or mistake ran against him, as one that sought dominion over conscience ; because he pressed, by his presence or epistles, a ready and zealous compliance with such good and wholesome things as tended to an orderly conversation about the affairs of the church, and in their walking before men. That which contributed much to this ill work, was, in some, a begrudging of this meek man the love and esteem he had and deserved in the hearts of the people ; and

* Called the Meeting for Sufferings, and now held monthly, except exigencies require more frequent sittings.

weakness in others, that were taken with their groundless suggestions of imposition and blind obedience.

They would have had every man independent ; that as he had the principle in himself, he should only stand and fall to that, and nobody else ; not considering that the principle is one in all ; and though the measure of light or grace might differ, yet the nature of it was the same ; and, being so, they struck at the spiritual unity, which a people guided by the same principle are naturally led into ; so that what is an evil to one is so to all, and what is virtuous, honest, and of good report to one, is so to all, from the sense and savour of the one universal principle which is common to all, and, which the disaffected also profess to be, the root of all true Christian fellowship, and that Spirit into which the people of God drink, and come to be spiritually-minded, and of one heart and one soul.

Some weakly mistook good order in the government of church affairs for discipline in worship, and that it was so pressed or recommended by him and other brethren. And they were ready to reflect the same things that Dissenters had very reasonably objected upon the national churches, that have coercively pressed conformity to their respective creeds and worships. Whereas these things related wholly to conversation, and the outward (and as I may say) civil part of the church, that men should walk up to the principles of their belief, and not be wanting in care and charity. But though some have stumbled and fallen through mistakes, and an unreasonable obstinacy, even to a prejudice ; yet, blessed be God, the generality have returned to their first love, and seen the work of the enemy, that loses no oppor-

tunity or advantage by which he may check or hinder the work of God, disquiet the peace of His church, and chill the love of His people to the truth and one to another; and there is hope of divers of the few that are yet at a distance.

In all these occasions, though there was no person the discontented struck so sharply at as this good man, he bore all their weakness and prejudice, and returned not reflection for reflection; but forgave them their weak and bitter speeches, praying for them that they might have a sense of their hurt, see the subtilty of the enemy to rend and divide, and return into their first love that thought no ill.

And truly, I must say, that though God had visibly clothed him with a divine preference and authority, and indeed, his very presence expressed a religious majesty, yet he never abused it; but held his place in the church of God with great meekness, and a most engaging humility and moderation. For upon all occasions, like his blessed Master, he was a servant to all; holding and exercising his eldership, in the invisible power that had gathered them, with reverence to the Head and care over the body; and was received only in that spirit and power of Christ, as the first and chief elder in this age; who, as he was therefore worthy of double honour, so for the same reason it was given by the faithful of this day; because his authority was inward and not outward, and that he got it and kept it by the love of God, and power of an endless life. I write my knowledge and not report, and my witness is true, having been with him for weeks and months together on divers occasions, and those of the nearest and most exercising nature, and

that by night and by day, by sea and by land, in this and in foreign countries : and I can say I never saw him out of his place, or not a match for every service or occasion. For in all things he acquitted himself like a man, yea, a strong man, a new and heavenly-minded man ; a divine and a naturalist, and all of God Almighty's making. I have been surprised at his questions and answers in natural things ; and whilst he was ignorant of useless and sophistical science, he had in him the foundation of useful and commendable knowledge, and cherished it everywhere. Civil, beyond all forms of breeding, in his behaviour ; very temperate, eating little, and sleeping less, though a bulky person.

Thus he lived and sojourned among us : and as he lived, so he died ; feeling the same eternal power, that had raised and preserved him, in his last moments. So full of assurance was he, that he triumphed over death ; and so even in his spirit to the last, as if death were hardly worth notice or a mention ; recommending to some with him, the despatch and dispersion of an epistle, just before written to the churches of Christ throughout the world, and his own books ; but, above all, Friends, and, of all Friends, those in Ireland and America, twice over saying, "Mind poor Friends in Ireland and America."

And to some that came in and inquired how he found himself, he answered, "Never heed, the Lord's power is over all weakness and death ; the Seed reigns, blessed be the Lord !" which was about four or five hours before his departure out of this world. He was at the great meeting near Lombard Street on the first day of the week, and it was the third following, about ten at night, when

he left us, being at the house of Henry Goldney in the same court. In a good old age he went, after having lived to see his children's children, to many generations in the truth. He had the comfort of a short illness, and the blessings of a clear sense to the last; and we may truly say, with a man of God of old, that "being dead he yet speaketh;" and though absent in body, he is present in spirit; neither time nor place being able to interrupt the communion of saints, or dissolve the fellowship of the spirits of the just. His works praise him, because they are to the praise of Him that wrought by him; for which his memorial is, and shall be blessed. I have done, as to this part of my Preface, when I have left this short epitaph to his name: "Many sons have done virtuously in this day; but, dear George, thou excellest them all."



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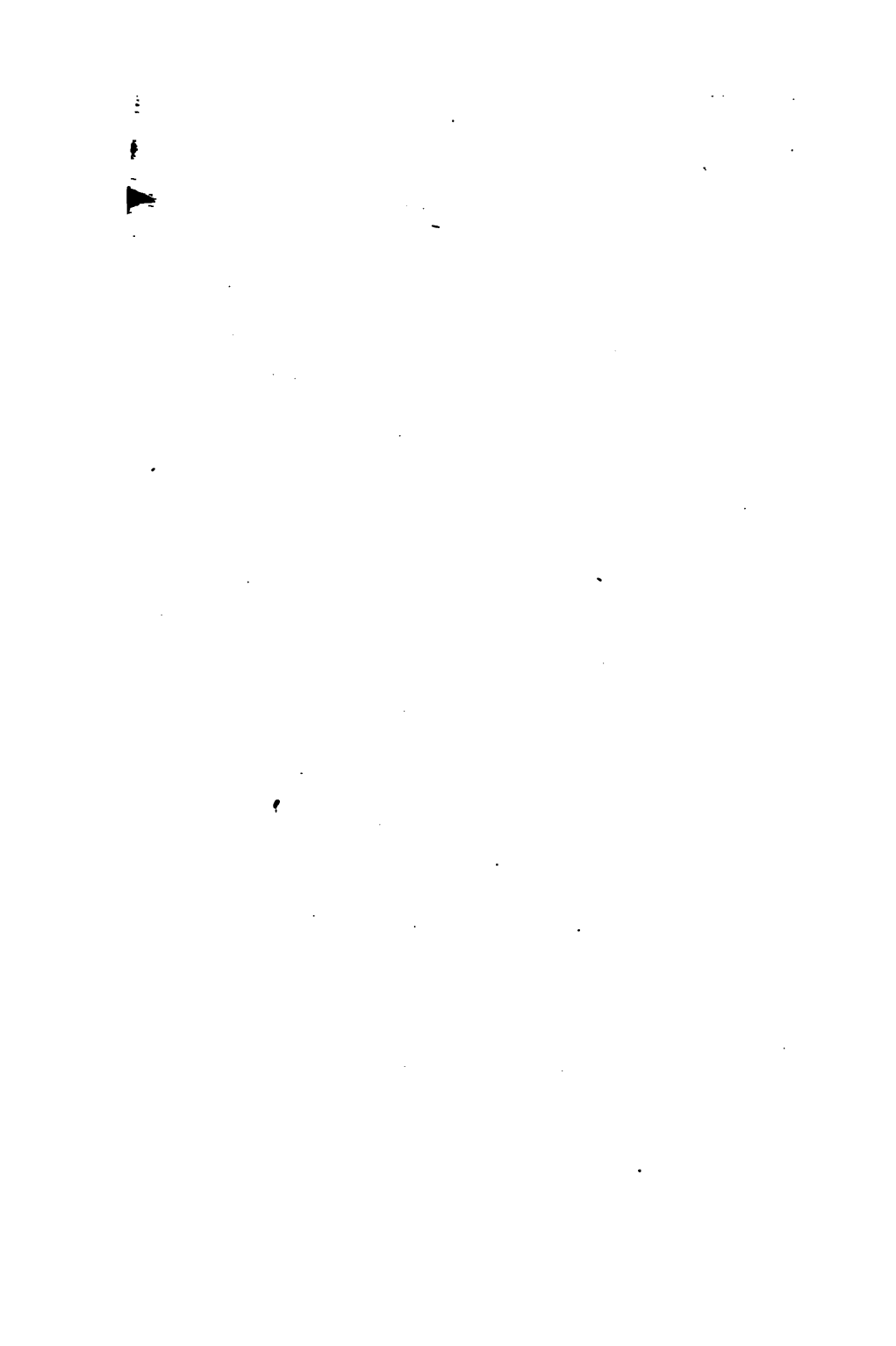
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